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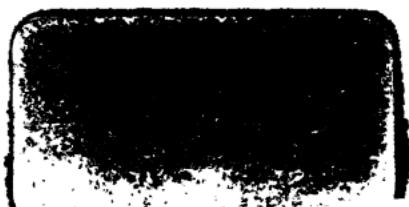
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THE
RUIN OF ROME:
OR,
~~AN EXPOSITION UPON THE WHOLE~~
REVELATION.

Wherein is plainly shewed and proved, that the Popish RELIGION, together with all the Power and Authority of ROME shall ebb and decay more throughout all the CHURCHES of EUROPE, and come to an utter overthrow even in this Life, before the end of the World.

Written especially for the comfort of Protestants, and the danting of Papists, Seminary Priests, Jesuits, and all that erroneous Rabble.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DENT,
PREACHER AT SOUTH-SHOOREY IN ESSEX.

To which is added,

AN EPITOME
Of the REV. MR. BRIGHTMAN'S EXPOSITION
upon the Revelation.

GLASGOW;
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J. H. Russell
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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
HIS VERY GOOD LORD,
ROBERT LORD RICH,
EVERLASTING CONSOLATION AND GOOD HOPE
THROUGH GRACE.

TO be a father to the fatherless, is properly the virtue of the Most High, and therefore fit for those who bear his name and office upon earth. Among whom (Right Honourable) seeing it hath pleased his Majesty to count your Lordship faithful, and to put you in so high a service, it shall (I assure myself) be matter of rejoicing unto your Lordship, to take the patronage of this poor orphan, which knoweth not whither to fly for succour, but to you, who did so many ways commend your favour to his late deceased father, that if he had lived to the birth of this his last offspring it was his full purpose (as many can witness) to have committed

it unto your Lordship's protection, as most fit among many to take this patronage upon you. That this young infant growing up under your roof, may in time effect that indeed, whereof it bears the name, to be *The Ruin of Rome*. To speak of the excellent parts thereof, and of what hope it is like to be in the church of Christ, I think needless, and I fear the note of partiality, it shall speak for itself, and (I doubt) will commend to all posterity his worthy father's memory. Now for myself (Right Honourable) being so straitly bound to this duty, in regard of my near conjunction with my late brother Mr. Dent, and great opportunity of his poor widow, was the more willingly drawn hereunto in two respects. The one to give some public testimony of my love towards him, and reverence of the rare grace which we all (who enjoyed his sweet society) did continually in our comfort behold in him. Whose learning his labours do shew; whose diligence, yea extreme and unwearied pains in his ministry publicly, privately, at home, and abroad, for twenty-four years at least, all our country can testify. All which being adorned with so special humility, do make his name the greater, and our loss the more grievous. I may not leave out this, which I avow to be as certain, as it

The Epistle Dedicatory.

is singular, that besides all other his great labours, he had (with the apostle) a special care of all the churches night and day, by study and fervent prayer, procuring the prosperity of Zion, and the ruin of Rome. And to end with his blessed end, his life was not more profitable to others, than his death is peaceable to himself; scarce a groan to be heard, though his fever must need be violent which dispatched him in three days. And having made a pithy confession of his faith, this faith said he, have I preached, this faith have I lived in, this faith I do live in, and this faith would I have sealed with my blood, if God had so thought it good, and tell my brethren so; and drawing near his end, he said, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: and now is that crown of righteousness laid up for me the which the Lord that righteous Judge shall give me in that day;' and so gave up his last breath with these words, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy law is exceeding large.'

The other respect, my special good Lord for the which I am the more willing to come thus upon the stage, though my part be small, full suitable to my ability, is, that I might be as the mouth of many, to publish to posterity, what high account all the

know the truth, among us at least, do make of your Lordship, that I dare say not the loins only, but the souls of thousands do bless you, and God for you; praying for a rich reward to be given you of the Lord, and that with your ancient predecessor honourable Nehemiah, the Lord would remember you herein, and wipe not out all the kindness you have shewed on the house of your God, and on the ministers thereof. For in the zeal of God, and uprightness of my heart, not to give titles unto men, which is not my wont, but to provoke all of like honourable condition to follow your godly practice: this I say, that as your pure religion is the crown of your nobility, so this is the crown of your religion, that besides your ordinary presence in the public assemblies of the church, your zeal to God, and love to his people, hath herein especially been manifested to the world, in your continual care to plant faithful preachers in all those livings which have been in your Lordships gift, or which by all your friends you could procure. What is the worthy fruit thereof cannot indeed be valued, much less by me now uttered: yet this I say with common consent of all sound-hearted Protestants, that if the true prophets of God be the chariots and horsemen of Israel, then may we refer to this honourable practice of

The Epistle Dedicatory.

your Lordship, and of other like Christ's patrons, as to a chief means under God and under the religious regiment of gracious Sovereign; the safety of his holiness' person, this admirable tranquillity of the realm, that notable ruin of Rome which is so worthily with us effected, shall be assuredly elsewhere in due time accomplished. And to say all in few words to this may we refer the safety of soul and body of many thousands in the land, v though they do and shall live by faith, doth their righteousness far exceed righteousness of all Popish hypocrites in duty to God, and to their dread sovereign our noble king.

Whereupon I may conclude, that I see no service more honourable to God, and profitable to his church, than care to bring into the Lord's temple painful labourers as both by life and doctrine do faithfully build up the same. on therefore, Right Honourable, and not to shine out in this dark world such light of good example: and rest upon his word, who cannot lie you shall shine in the kingdom of whereinto shall enter no unclean neither whatsoever worketh abomination or lies, but they which are written in Lamb's book of life. To which ble

heritance, immortal, undefiled, and that fadeth not, that God of his mercy would bring you, my hearts desire and prayer is, and shall be: and in the mean season, that the years of your life being multiplied, your life may be full of honour to God, profit to his church, and comfort to your own soul.

Your honours most deeply bound,

EZEKIAL CULVERWELL.

THE EPISTLE
TO THE
CHRISTIAN READER.

BEING often requested, gentle reader, and much importuned by sundry, both learned and godly, to publish that doctrine of the Apocalipse, which divers of them with lively voice heard publicly delivered, I did at last, upon my most mature deliberation, yield unto their reasonable request; I mean the reasons of their request. Indeed I do ingenuously confess, that I am the unftest of many, which this age, God be thanked, doth afford, to deal in a matter of so great importance, or any wise to be employed in so great and honourable a service as this is. But if I do industriously use my small talent, and be found faithful in a little, I hope it shall have both chearful and comfortable acceptation with the church of God. For this I presume will be

granted of all, that he which hath but a little strength, and yet he putteth it forth to the uttermost to do good withal, is more to be commended, than he which hath thrice his strength, and useth it not to the help and benefit of others. And true it is indeed, that sundry worthy labours of divers excellent men upon the Apocalypse, are already extant, so as he may seem to pour water into the sea, or go about to mend the crows eyes, that will attempt to add any thing to that which is already published. But know this, O Christian reader, that the Lord's garden is so large and plentiful of all most sweet and pleasant flowers, that where any one hath gathered a nosegay most fragrant and delectable, another may come after, and gather another not to be contemned. For the wisdom of God is such an undrainable fountain and head-spring, that where one hath drawn much before, another may come happily, and draw as much afterward; yea tho' thousands do succeed; yet can this fountain never be drawn dry. Be it far from me to arrogate any thing to myself, above others; for I am privy enough to mine own means, and do freely confess, that in this work, I have received much light from others; and therefore do not as a judge, give sentence upon other men's works; But as one that

would furnish the same feast, bring in my dish among them. Or as one that in the same cause would come in as a third or a fourth witness to testify and confirm the same thing. And verily through the gracious assistance of God's Spirit, my simple purpose and endeavour is to give a lift to the uttermost of my power, to further that which is already happily begun, and to provoke others of greater gifts, to come after with their great lights and lanthorns in their hands, to descry and discover whatsoever in this prophesy is not yet fully seen into. I am not ignorant that some would not have this book meddled withal, nor in any wise to be expounded among the common people, because (say they) it is so dark and hard to understand. But let all such leave their own opinions, and hearken what the Holy Ghost saith, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophesy,' &c. What can be said more? or more effectually to stir us up to hear, and read, and with all gladness to embrace this book, than to tell us, that in so doing we shall be blessed? For the things contained in this book, be no trifles: they be not things only for a shew to move wonderment, or to delight the curious mind of men, but such as indeed do give true blessedness unto all those that are well;

instructed in them. What thing is greater, than to be blessed forevermore? If we be not exceeding dull, yea, even like stocks and stones, it must needs move us and stir us up. For who will wittingly and willingly lose his own blessedness, or suffer it to be taken from him, when as he may have it? If any will object that a man may be blessed well enough without the knowledge of this book, and that there be books enough in the scripture, to procure our blessedness without this. And that thousands are now in heaven, which never knew what this book meant: I answer, that all this doth not take away the necessary use of this book: for the Holy Ghost doth pronounce a blessing upon the heads of those that read and study this book, not because a man cannot be saved without it: but because of the great comfort which it ministereth unto us of this age, and hath ministered unto all the churches since the apostles times. For it is the prophecy of this age, and the prophecy of all the ages, since Christ, wherein is fully shewed what shall be the estate and condition of the church in the several ages thereof, unto the end of the world. For God according to his admirable wisdom and mercy, hath never from the beginning left his church without a prophecy, for the great

comfort thereof.* For we know that immediately after the fall of our first parents, God, himself, for the great comfort of his church, did foretell and fore-prophecy long before of that restoration which should be made by the Messiah his Son, according as it came to pass in the fulness of time.— Afterward he did foretel his people of Israel, of their great servitude, and intolerable bondage in Egypt, and also of the end and full determination therefore, after four hundred and thirty years, Gen. iii. xv.— After all this, he foretold by his servants the prophets of the captivity in Babylon, and the full expiration thereof at the end of seventy years, Jer. xxv. And yet further, for the comfort and consolation of his people, he fore-told by Daniel and Ezekiel, of the great afflictions and troubles which his church should endure by the persecutions of the divided Greek empire; Dan.vii. Ezek.xxi. (I mean, Alexander's posterity, especially the kings of Egypt, and Syria, which descended of Ptolomeus and Seleucus, whom the scriptures calleth the kings of the North, and of the South) by the space of 194 years, and of the precise determination thereof at the coming of the Messiah. Dan. chapters viii. ix. xi. So then what care God hath had of his church in all ages before the coming of his Son in the flesh,

so as to foretel both of the affliction itself, and also of the just period and determination thereof. And shall we not think that God hath the like care now for his church, which then he had: or hath he not as great and provident care for the good of his church since the promised Messiah was actually exhibited as before? Yes assuredly, and much more too: for if his care and providence was so great for his church, being in her wardship and minority, then much more now being come to her ripeness, and full age. If then it was less glorious, then much more now, being far more glorious. Therefore now unto us he foretelleth by his servant John, what shall be the estate of the church unto the end of the world; and therefore, 'Blessed is he that heareth and readeth this book:' since it foretelleth of the churches affliction in this age by the whore of Babylon, and of the full end and determination thereof. It sheweth justly and precisely what the church hath suffered since the apostles time in several ages, and what it shall suffer; and also how all the enemies thereof shall shortly be troden under foot. What can be more joyful or comfortable to all the people of God, than to know beforehand that Babylon shall fall: Rome shall fall down, Antichrist the great persecutor of the church shall be

utterly confounded and consumed in this world, notwithstanding all plots and policies, crafts and devices to the contrary; notwithstanding all forces and armies, cunningly contrived and raised up against the church by seminary Priests, Jesuits, Pope, Cardinal and king of Spain? For all these in this age do very busily bestir them, and ransack all corners of their wits to repair the ruins of Rome, and to make up the breaches which are made in the walls of Babylon their great city. But alas! all in vain, for it shall fall: It shall fall, it shall as Dagon before the presence of the ark, do what they can, spite of their hearts, mangre their beards, it shall without all hope of recovery: For hath the Lord spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? or any word of his ever fall to the ground? Since therefore the Jesuits and secular Priests do so brisk about, and croak in every corner, as greatly fearing the fall of their Babylon, and the drying up of their Euphrates, it stands us all in hand to be as resolute for Christ, as they are for Antichrist: and as studious to uphold the kingdom of God, as they are to uphold the kingdom of the devil. And for this purpose it is very requisite and necessary, that all the Lord's people should be acquainted with this book, and armed against them with

the things revealed in this prophesy.— For this book is a most precious jewel which God hath bestowed upon his church in this last age, and it is a great pity that all the servants of God are not better acquainted with it, especially in these times, for now in this age is and shall be the very heat of the war, and brunt of the battle betwixt Papists and Protestants, betwixt God and Bérial: betwixt the armies of Christ, and the armies of Antichrist. Now this prophesy layeth all open, and plainly telleth us what shall be the issue and success in the day of battle; which side shall have the victory, and which side shall go down. And therefore very needful it is, that it should be expounded again and again, and all the Lord's people made thoroughly acquainted with it. For in this age wherein we live, this prophesy can never be enough opened and beaten upon, that all good Protestants may be armed with it against future times, even as it were with an armour of proof. Saint John plainly telleth the people of his time, even the churches of Asia, that they should be blessed by reading and studying this book, because they should thereby be fore-warned and fore-armed against many eminent troubles and future dangers. For faith he, ‘the time is at hand:’ that is to say, some

things were even then to be fulfilled. For some matters foretold in this book, did begin to be fulfilled, even presently after they were shewed unto John; for the mystery of iniquity did even then begin to work. The church in the apostles time had her conflicts. The ten great persecutions began even then to be raised up. Heresies shortly after began to spring and sprout. Afterwards by degrees, the great Anti-christ did approach toward his cursed seat. And after all this St. John foretelleth how he should take possession of his abominable and most execrable seat and see of Rome; how he should reign and rule for a time as the monarch of the world; how he should prevail against the church, and make war against the saints; how he should reign but a short time, and afterward come tumbling down, as fast as ever he rose up, and decrease as fast as ever he increased, therefore 'blessed is he (saith St. John) that diligently readeth and peruseth this book,' that thereby he may foresee all these things, and be armed against them. For as the heathen man saith, *Levius ludit quicquid provideris ante,* "Foreseeing dangers do least hurt." Now to apply all this to our times, I say, they are twice happy that are studious and painful in searching out the true sense and meaning of this prophesy,

that thereby they may be strengthened against all the assaults of the Papists, our professed enemies, and the enemies of God's church, and stand fast to the everlasting truth of God, knowing for a certainty that the sons of Belial shall not long prevail, Rev. ix. 11. The date of their reign is almost out, and the time draweth on apace, wherein both they and their king Abaddon shall be laid in the dust. But I will now proceed to a new reason, to prove that this book of the Revelation ought not to be concealed, but openly preached and published to the whole church of God in this age. My reason is taken out of Rev. xxii. 10. 'Seal not the words of the prophesy of this book, for the time is at hand.' Here is a direct commandment from God, that this book and doctrine of it may not be sealed up, that is to say, kept close from the knowledge of God's people, but it must ly always unsealed, that all men may open it, read it, and see what is in it, for it is a borrowed speech taken from sealing of letters. For we all know that love letters are sealed, none may open them, or read them, but only those whom it doth concern; but if they be purposely left unsealed, then any man may read them without danger: So the Lord willeth and commandeth, that this book of the Revelation

should of purpose be left unsealed, that all the people of God might read it, study it, and know it. If any man doubt whether the metaphor of sealing be thus taken in the scripture, let him read the places that are quoted, and in all those he shall find it taken in this sense. Whereby it doth evidently appear, that the mind and meaning of God is, that this book should be proclaimed and published in all the churches, Isa. xxix. 11. Dan. xii. 9. Rev. iv. 1—x.4. And upon this ground, I hold that every minister of the gospel standeth bound, as much as in him lieth, to preach the doctrine of the Revelation to his particular charge and congregation; for every minister of the gospel must shew unto his people all the counsel of God, and keep back nothing, as Paul testifieth that he did, to the great comfort of his conscience. But the doctrine of the Revelation is a part and parcel of the council and will of God, therefore it must not be concealed or kept back from the knowledge of the people of God. And in these days I think it not only meet and convenient that it should be so, but in truth absolutely necessary.

But now me thinketh I hear some men say, What, must this book of the Revelation be preached and made known to the common people? alas, what should they do

with it? It is not for them to meddle with at all: it is not for their diet. I answer, yet not I, but the Holy Ghost, that this book must be made known to all the servants of God; for St. John calls it the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which God gave him to shew unto all his servants. It is plain therefore, that all the servants of God, both men and women, young and old, rich and poor, must be made acquainted with this book. Moreover, John is commanded by the God of heaven, to set down all the visions which the angel shewed him, and to write them all in a book, and send them to the seven churches of Asia; that is, to people of all sorts and conditions; and therefore this book doth not only concern preachers and deep divines, but even all the Lord's people whatsoever: for it doth minister great comfort and strength of faith to all the people of God that live in this age. But here the Papists object, that this book is full of darkness and obscurity, and therefore not for the common people to meddle with; nay, say they, there are as many mysteries as words in it, and therefore why should men trouble their heads about it. But no wonder though the Papists say so much, for it is the wound of their kingdom, and the battery of their Babylon. As for others both learned and

godly, which in this point are almost of the same mind, that they will not meddle with this book of the Revelation, I cannot but marvel at it. The modesty and humility of some very rare and reverend men, for learning, and great variety of gifts (which notwithstanding scoff much at this book) is greatly to be commended: but if I were worthy to give them advice, I would wish them in this behalf to change their minds, and to be of another resolution; for I dare avouch it, that there is nothing in this prophesy which study and diligence, with prayer and humility, may not overcome. True it is indeed, that the shell is thick and hard to break, but being broken the kernel is most sweet and pleasant. If any be discouraged with the darkness and obscurity of it, let him hearken to these reasons following. First, it is called a Revelation, which is as much to say, as an uncovering of things which did ly hid; if it be an uncovering, and revealing of things, no doubt it may be known and seen into, for revealed things are for us and our children. If it be a revelation, how say some that it cannot be understood? For it is contrary to the nature of a revelation, to be so dark that none can understand it. But shall we say, that the Holy Ghost which is the Spirit of truth hath given a wrong name unto it?

God forbid. For if it hide matters, or set them forth that it cannot be understood, then it is not rightly called a revelation. If this book be so mystical that it cannot be understood; if the interpretation of it be uncertain; if the common people cannot be taught to understand it; how then should the Holy Ghost? 'Blessed is he that readeth the words of this prophesy,' Rev. i. 3. xii. 7. Let any man judge that hath common sense: can any man be blessed by hearing and reading those things which he understandeth not? Certainly not. Then it followeth that this book may be understood, and no doubt is understood of many, and might be better understood of many more, if they would bend their wits and studies unto it, Rev. xxii. 10. The Holy Ghost, as is said before, willeth and commandeth that the words of this prophesy should not be sealed up. Whereby it is evident that he would have them read and made known to all. Then I reason thus: that which is open and unsealed may be read and known. But this book is open and unsealed, therefore it may be read and known. If men say, the matters of this prophesy are sealed and hid, and God say they be unsealed and open, whether shall we believe men or God? If any will reply and say, we feel and find by experience,

that the words of this book are hard to be understood. I answer that the fault is in ourselves, because we are so negligent in the search and study thereof. For if we did with that humility, and reverend care that ought to be in us; search after the things revealed in this book, we should find that they be not fealed up, but ly open to be read and known. True it is indeed, that if any man light upon some piece, and take it by itself, he shall find it very dark: but if he look upon the whole course of matters through the book, and mark and observe diligently how things be iterated, he shall find no such darkness as he feareth, for there is a notable coherence of matters, and course of times observed in this book, even from the first chapter unto the last, as God willing, shall more fully and plainly appear in the particular opening and interpretation thereof. One great objection against this prophesy is, that the fathers profess it is full of mysteries, and that they could not understand it. If they could not understand it say some, how shall we understand it? Is it not great arrogancy for us to say we understand it better than they did? I answer no; for a man of mean learning in comparison, may now in these days more easily understand and expound this book, than the learned doctor, and fathers in an-

cient time. The reason is this, we live in an age, wherein the most of the things prophesied in this book are fulfilled. Now the fulfilling of a prophesy is the best exposition of it. But as for the fathers, they lived in a time wherein many of these things were not come to pass nor fulfilled, and therefore more hard for them to interpret and understand, for these things in this prophesy which are not yet fulfilled, are hardest for us of this age to understand and resolve of. But when a prophesy is fulfilled, it is an easy matter to say, this was the meaning of the prophet. Some things in this book were fulfilled before the days of the fathers, and some things in the days wherein they lived: and both those they did clearly understand. Some things were fulfilled after their days, as the rising and reigning of the great Antichrist, which they did not so clearly see into. Hereupon it cometh to pass that many things, which unto them were very obscure, are unto us most clear and manifest, as being already fulfilled, insomuch that all which are not wilfully blinded may see and understand them, yea the most unlearned. Be not therefore discouraged, dear reader, at the darkness and difficulty of this book. Do not prejudicially resolve and set down with thyself, that the natural sense of this book

Cannot be given, nor the true meaning found out, but that we must be fond when we have done all we can, to rest in uncertain conjectures, some following one sense and some another, as seemeth most like and profitable. But no man can say confidently and precisely, this is the meaning of the Holy Ghost. Oh! be not of that mind good Christian brother, for if we have not an undoubted certainty for the sense and meaning of this prophesy, we are never the nearer: and that is it which the Papists would drive us unto. But know for a certainty, that the natural sense of this book, is to be found out, as well as of other books of the scripture. And that we might not be left to ourselves in the dark, and to our uncertain conjectures, and doubtful interpretations, behold the merciful goodness of God to his church, who himself doth expound the darkest, and most mystical things in this prophesy, or at least so many of them, and so far, as the rest are thereby laid open and made manifest. The Lord himself expoundeth some things in the first chapter, which give clear light to the first vision. The angel expoundeth divers other things. In chapter xvii. which is the key to this prophesy, the angel doth of purpose, open and interpret all the greatest doubts of this book; as who is the whore of Babylon?

who is the beast? what are his seven heads? what are his ten horns? what are the waters which the woman, that is, the whore of Rome sitteth upon? Moreover, for the better understanding of this prophecy, we must note, that the writings of Moses and the prophets, unto which there are sundry allusions, and from which sundry things are drawn, do clear divers things in this Revelation. The knowledge of antiquities ministreth much aid to the understanding of this prophecy. The knowledge of the histories of the church, and the particular state thereof in divers ages, bringeth great light. The observation of the phrases and manner of speech used by the old prophets, doth help also not a little. The serious and deep weighing of all the circumstances of the text, and comparing one thing with another, the consequents with the antecedents, and the antecedents with the consequents, furthereth greatly for the blotting out of the true and natural sense. And furthermore, as the Spirit of God is this author of this prophecy, so the same Spirit is the best interpreter of it, and doth open and reveal it to all such, as using all other good means are earnest and humble suitors unto God, for the illumination thereof, whereby they may all understand both this, and other mysteries of his will, which the

apostle faith, God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit, ‘ for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.’ To all this may be added the knowledge of arts, tongues, and the learned writings and interpretations of sundry excellent men, which all do bring great furtherance to the understanding of this prophecy. Since then there are so many helps for the opening and expounding of this Revelation, why should any be discouraged from the reading and study thereof? But if any man demand a reason, why St. John writeth this Revelation in such mystical allegorical manner? I answer, that there may be divers reasons yielded hereof. *First*, that the world being blinded might fulfil the things herein specified. *Secondly*, because John was to publish this Revelation in such a manner and form as he had received it from Jesus Christ, which was figurative and allegorical. *Thirdly*, because it was much more wisdom to foretel the destruction of the Roman empire, which all that time bare the sway almost over all the world, under covert of figurative speeches, than in plain terms, least the Roman princes should rage more against the Christians, even in that respect. The like also may be said for Daniel’s dark manner of delivering his prophecy; for if he had uttered those things

in plain terms, which he spake darkly and allegorically, it might have cost him his life. For the heathen enemies would never have endured to hear that all their empire's glory and renown should fall one after another, and one by another; and that the Jews were the only holy people whom God did defend, and to whom in the end God wculd not only give a quiet possession of their own land and kingdom, but also a kingdom everlasting, and that thro' their Meffiah and great deliverer. But to come to a conclusion, dear reader, thou shalt find in this short treatise, *First*, an exposition of the first thirteen chapters unto the twentieth, reduced all to one head, which is to prove the five points propounded, and last of all, the three chapters following briefly and plainly expounded. If any through laziness will not, or through want of leisure cannot read over this short treatise, yet for his comfort, let him read those things only which are written upon the fourteenth chapter. And thus, Christian reader, hoping that thou wilt not neglect that which may be for thine own good, I commend thee to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build farther, and to give thee an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. *Thine in the Lord.*

ARTHUR DENT.

Upon the fourteenth chapter of the book of the Revelation, the five following points are handled.

First, That Babylon in this book of the Revelation is called Rome.

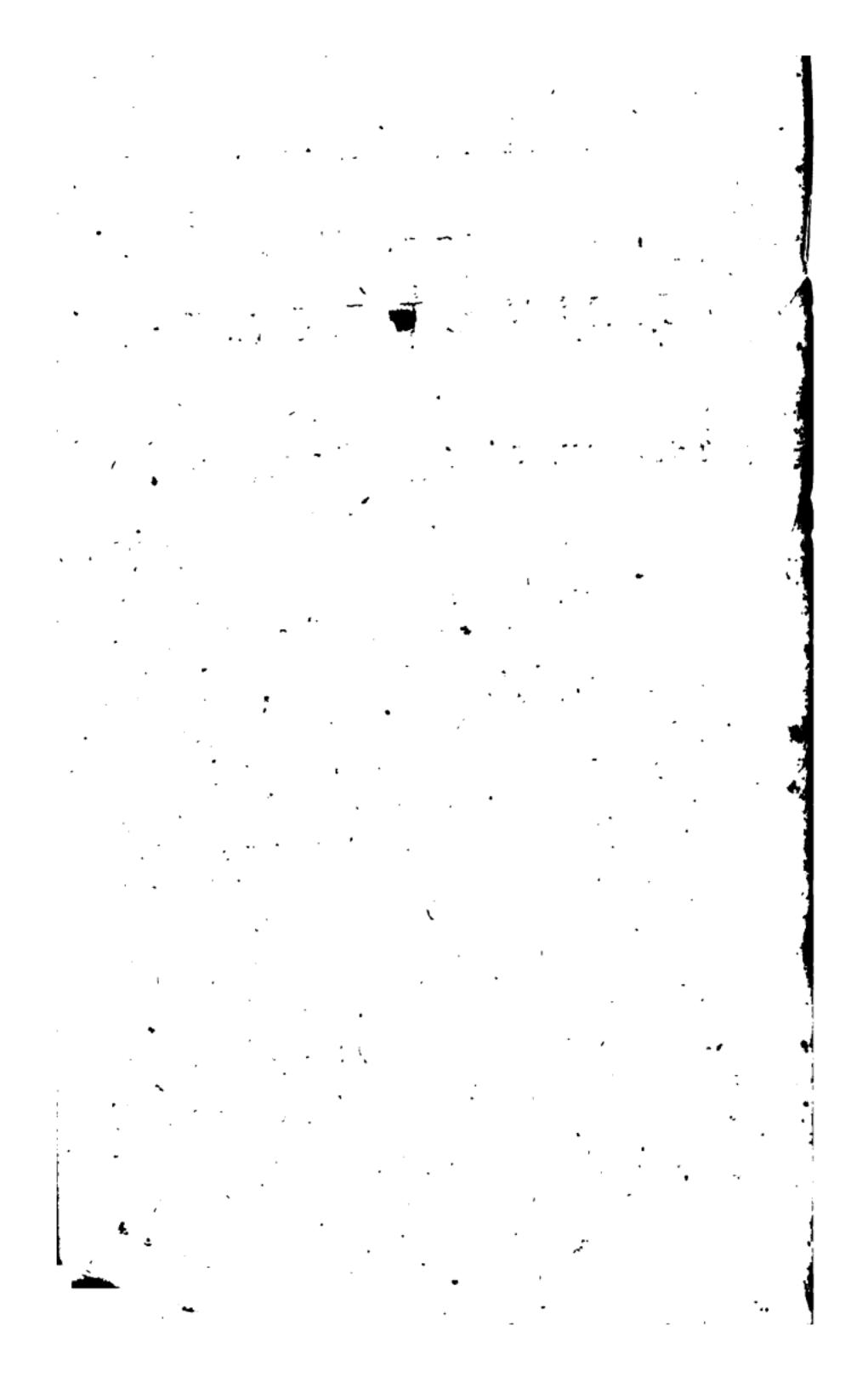
Secondly, That Rome shall fall, and how.

Thirdly, That Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter desolation in this life, before the last judgment.

Fourthly, By whom, and when it shall be overthrown.

Fifthly, The causes of the utter ruin and overthrow thereof.

Rev. xxiii. 4. I heard a voice from heaven say, go out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.



THE
RUIN OF ROME:
OR, AN
EXPOSITION ON THE REVELATION.

BEFORE I enter into the exposition of this prophecy, I think it not amiss to handle six circumstantial points, which may give some light to the whole matter following:

Firstly, The instrument that wrote this book.

Secondly, The time when he wrote it.

Thirdly, The place where he received it.

Fourthly, The person to whom he wrote it.

Fifthly, The end and use of his writing this prophecy.

Lastly, The authority of it.

As touching the first, it is agreed upon amongst the soundest divines, that John the apostle, or evangelist, John the disciple, whom Jesus loved, was the author and instrument of penning this prophecy, as he

himself testifieth, saying, 'I am John which
' saw these things and heard them,' Rev.
xxii. 8.—i. 19. And he received a com-
mandment from Jesus Christ which hath
the keys of hell and death, that he should
write the ~~things~~ which he had seen and
heard, and set them all down together in a
book. Now we all know that the testimo-
ny of John is of great weight, though he
be but a man; for he is such a man as is
firmly to be believed in all that he speaketh.
Rev. i. 11. He is an apostle, an instru-
ment of the Holy Ghost, and so guided by
the Spirit of God, that he speaketh and
uttereth nothing that is his own. He was
well known, and approved. For we must
consider, that what an apostle did utter, he
did utter it as the instrument of the Spirit,
which cannot err. For the prophets and
apostles did not write the holy scriptures as
they were men only, but as they were the
immediate and certain instruments of the
Holy Ghost, of purpose chosen and set a-
part to pen and publish the holy books of
God. This St. Peter confirmeth saying:
'Prophesy came not in old time by the will
' of man, but holy men of God spake as
' they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' 2
Pet. i. 21. The apostle Paul also ~~sayeth~~
the same touching the gospel, wh
'It was not after man, neither

‘ he it of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ,’ Gal. i. 12. Therefore when this our apostle saith, ‘ I am John which saw these things, and heard them,’ he gives us to understand, that he was both an eye and an ear witness. He bringeth not matters which he hath heard by uncertain report: he delivereth this book to the churches, they which received it at his hands did know him to be a most faithful servant of the Lord, even a great apostle, which delivereth not any thing but that which he had received of the Lord, and therefore he testifieth, that he saw and heard all the things which he hath written in this book. Moreover he testifieth of himself, that he was called unto authority by Jesus Christ, to write this prophecy, and did nothing herein of his own brain. For saith he, ‘ I John heard behind me a great voice, as it had been of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and that which thou seest write in a book and send it unto the churches.’ Here we see how John is called by Alpha and Omega, that is, Jesus Christ, to write this doctrine of the Revelation. But may some man say, was not John called before? was he not one of the Lamb’s twelve apostles? had he not many years executed the office of the apostleship? must he now have a new calling,

and a second calling? what needs he being an apostle to be called and authorised again? To this I answer, that this matter now in hand was a new work, and therefore requires a new and special calling. It is a strange revelation, and therefore requires a new authority to meddle in it. For in this prophecy God dealeth with John, as he did with the old prophets. For when he would foreshew unto any of them especial matters, he called them by glorious vision, as we may read what a glorious vision Isaiah had; what a vision full of glory Ezekiel and Daniel had, even in majesty like unto this of John. Thus then it is to be considered. John now is as one of the old prophets, to foreshew things to come; therefore the Lord appeareth unto him in a vision, and calleth him thereunto as he appeared unto them, and called them. Let this then suffice for a reason of John's now calling to his new work and office. And thus much touching the first circumstance.

Now followeth the second circumstance, which is the time when John received this prophecy, which is noted to be upon the Lord's day. It is the day which St. Paul, to the Corinthians calleth the first day of the week, in which the churches did meet for the holy exercises of religion, which is also evident, because he saith they came to-

gether to break bread, Acts xx. 7. Now the observation of a seventh day is of divine institution, even from the beginning. It is natural, moral, and perpetual; for God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it. We are therefore to think, that although John now in his exile was absent in body from the church assemblies, yet he was present with them in spirit, commanding them most earnestly unto God in his holy prayers, and meditations; and therefore it is said, that he was ravished in the Spirit upon the Lord's day. So we read that the like befel Daniel, when he was a prisoner in Babylon; the like befel unto Ezekiel, who was taken by the Spirit of God, and carried to Jerufalem, the like to Peter, the like to Paul, Acts x. 10. But the special reason of John's ravishment in the spirit at this time was, that thereby he might be made more fit and capable to receive and understand all those great mysteries and heavenly visions, which now should be shewed unto him. And withal let us observe, that all men are always most capable of heavenly things, when they are most in the Spirit: For God doth evermore most reveal himself to such as are most in prayer, reading and meditation, and to such as make greatest conscience to spend his sabbaths Christianly, and religiously, accord-

ing to his great commandment. And let us always be sure of this, that the more fervent and zealous we are in religious duties, the more familiar acquaintance we shall find with God, and he will at all times be the more open-hearted unto us, and will hide nothing from us that may be for his glory, and our good. For such as are much in heavenly contemplation, he doth reckon not amongst his servants, but amongst his dearest friends, to whom he will make known all things that he hath heard of the Father, John xv. 15.

But now let us proceed to the third circumstance. The third circumstance is the place where John received this prophecy, and that is set down to be the island of Patmos, which, as the geographers write, is a little desert island lying in the Ægean sea, wherein it is reported that John the apostle was banished by the emperor Domitian, about the year of our Lord 96, and there received, and wrote this book of the Revelation, where note by the way, that there is no place so obscure or vast, wherein a godly mind may not aspire up unto heaven, and receive a greater largeness of supernatural things; for Daniel in prison, Peter in a tanner's house, Paul in a broken ship received a super-abundant measure of grace more to be esteemed than all the gold

of India. Some write, that this island of Patmos, is accounted among the islands called Sporados, which lie over against Asia, and the city of Ephesus, and was in sight both of Europe, and Africa; so that it seemed to be as it were a middle seat or holy chair, out of which Christ preached by John from heaven to the whole world. And indeed the councils of God are wonderful; and his goodness unspeakable; which revealeth so great mysteries to his faithful, as it were out of the Romish prison, and Babylonish captivity.

Moreover, John declareth the cause of his coming into the same island; for he saith, He was there for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, that is, for the preaching and constant profession of the gospel of Christ.

History reports, that John was apprehended in Asia, and by the soldiers led to Rome, that he might plead his cause before the emperor Domitian, who most savagely and cruelly condemned the innocent, and caused him to be put into a caldron of hot boiling oil, out of which when he by miraculous providence escaped without harm, he was carried and conveyed into the island of Patmos.

But immediately after John's banishment, God met well enough with this persecuting

emperor Domitian. For in the fifteenth year of his reign, he was cruelly and most shamefully murdered by his own servants. And thus much for the third circumstance.

Now it followeth to speak of the fourth circumstance, which is, the persons to whom this prophecy is written, and that is set down in the first chapter and first verse, to be all the servants of God. As many therefore as be the servants of God, must attended unto this book, hear it, read it, and remember it, for to all such it is dedicated by the Holy Ghost, to all such it belongeth, for all such it is written and recorded.

Some do falsely and foolishly imagine, that it was given only to John, and that it might likewise be given to some special men, as to some great scholars or deep divines, which could tell how to use it, and now to wield it. But we see how grossly they err; for the Holy Ghost saith, it belongeth to all the servants of God. And moreover, John is willed and commanded to write all the things which he saw in sundry visions in a book together, and to send it to the seven churches which is in Asia, Rev. i. 11. because the Lord would have it remain in perfect record unto the use of the whole church, both that the church might have the custody of this book, and

also that it might be a faithful witness unto the end of the world, that this book was written and penned by John the apostle, of whose truth and sincerity the church had sufficient experience.

True it is indeed that there are but seven churches named, but under these seven churches all others are comprehended. It had been an infinite matter to reckon up all the particular churches which were then in the world and to have opened their several estates: therefore under these seven churches of Asia, and their particular and several estates, the state of the universal church militant is laid open. I conclude therefore that the whole doctrine of St. John's Revelation, appertaineth to the universal church of Christ throughout all the world, and in all times and ages, since it was written and recorded. And that as all scripture is written for our instruction and comfort, Rom. xv. 4, and as all scripture is given by divine inspiration, is profitable to teach and convince, &c. 2 Tit. iii. 16. so this book of the Revelation is written for the special comfort and instruction of the church in these last days. And so I do conclude this fourth point. The first circumstantial point is, the end and use of this prophecy, which is to publish and blaze abroad the things which must shortly come

to pass, that is, all things prophesied in this book, and to be fulfilled even to the end of the world, and whereas he saith, that these things must come to pass, Rev. i. 1. he gives us to understand how great the stableness, and assuredness of God's determination is. For look what things are fore-appointed by God's determinate purpose, they are altogether unchangeable: the Lord is God, and he is not changed, Malachi iii. 6. And he saith, ' My determination shall stand,' And Christ saith, ' Heaven and earth shall pass away,' &c. Matth. xxiv. 35. It is therefore most certain, that every particular thing contained in this prophecy, shall be fulfilled in God's appointed time. For God hath disclosed these things to his Son Christ; not to the end he should shut them up again in himself, but that he should show them forth to the godly, that the whole church might fare the better by them. It doth then become us all to inquire and search into these things which must shortly come to pass, that thereby we may be strengthened and comforted against all future dangers. And Christ saith, ' Behold I come shortly: blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophesy,' &c. Rev. xxii. 7. But how shall we keep them except we know them? And how shall we know them

except we read them, and study them? If therefore we mean to be partakers of this blessedness, we must not only esteem this book to be very profitable, but absolutely necessary for all the servants of God to be exercised in. And if ever there were any time wherein it behoved to set forth, to urge and to bear in this doctrine to all the people of God, then it is chiefly necessary to be done in this our time. For this age of ours hath in the Pope's kingdom many sharp and quick wits, which commend with marvellous praises both the Pope and the church of Rome, and buzz into the ears of the common people, and unlearned sort, many things quite contrary to the doctrine of the scripture. The Jesuites and priests are grown exceeding crafty and cunning. The Papists are rich, wealthy, and full of armour and ammunition, Popery seemeth to gain ground again, and the Papists look for a day. It stands us then to love Christ and his gospel, that we should be well appointed, and thoroughly armed against them. And for this purpose the Revelation of St. John is of great use and necessity.

As I said before, so I say again, that it is the prophecy of our time, written to this special end, that by it we might be both fore-warned and fore-armed. If we do consider the whole matter of this book, we

shall easily find out the use and end of it; for the excellent matter of it doth argue the excellent end and use of it.

Now then, as concerning the general matter of this book, here are to be found very large and lively descriptions of the most glorious person of Christ, and all his excellent offices, both of King, Priest, and Prophet; and also most notable descriptions of the church, and of the ministers of it; and of the persecutions and afflictions, which it must of necessity pass through in the world, Rev. chapters i. ii. iii. Also of God's merciful providence for his church, and most vigilant care over it in the midst of all extremities. Here are set before our eyes very lively descriptions of the churches deadly enemies; both of Satan himself, and his three great instruments, the Roman emperor, the Pope, and the Turk.

Here are set down all their cruel persecutions of the church, and their utter overthrow in the end. Here are described, hell, death, the resurrection, and the last judgment. Here also the very kingdom of heaven, is at large described, with all those great rewards, infinite glory, and endless felicity which remain for all the faithful worshippers of God.

I conclude therefore, that for as much as this prophecy is of such excellent con-

tents, therefore the use and necessity of it must needs be very great. And for this cause John is willed and commanded by Alpha and Omega to write the things which he had seen, the things that were, and the things that shall come hereafter: by the things which he had seen, is meant that glorious vision mentioned in Rev. i. 13, 14, 15, 16: wherein Jesus Christ did appear unto him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, in a most glorious manner, as is there described. And all this was in the island of Patmos, where John was first called and authorized to this work, and therefore he is willed first of all, to record this vision which he had already seen.

By the things that are, he meaneth the present state of the seven churches of Asia, which were then the most flourishing churches in the world, as they are described in the second and third chapters; and in them the estate of all other churches.

By the things that shall be, he meaneth all the prophecy of this book, which were to be fulfilled in their time, and all those strange accidents, which should come to pass in process of time, and the several ages of the church, even unto the end of the world. Thus we see how John received a precise commandment from the Son of God, to write things past, present, and to come; that they might stand in record un-

to all posterity, from generation to generation. Thus much touching the fifth circumstance, which is the end and use of this book.

Now followeth to speak of the last circumstantial point, which is the authority of this prophecy, which is strongly confirmed from the author of it, which is Jesus Christ, and therefore it is called the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him. And again it is written, 'I Jesus sent mine angel to testify these things in the churches,' Rev. xxii. 16. Here we see plainly, that Jesus Christ the very Son of God, the Alpha and Omega, is the author of this book, for he subscribes his name unto it, and sets his hand and seal unto it. Needs therefore the authority of it be very great, which cometh from so great a personage; for look what dignity and authority he is of, from whom the book cometh, of the same dignity and authority is the book itself.

Another strong argument to confirm the authority of this book, may be taken from the protestation of Jesus Christ in these words; 'I protest unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these sayings, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.'

‘ And if any shall diminish the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.’

Rev. xxii. 18.

Here we see how Jesus Christ maketh the authority to this book equal to all the other oracles of God, to the which it is not lawful for any man to add or detract under pain of condemnation. It maketh much also for the authority of this book, that St. John doth so often repeat, reiterate, and inculcate his own name, I John, I John, I John; I John the apostle; I John the evangelist; I John the divine, shewing by all these repetitions, how needful a thing it was that the faithful should be thoroughly instructed who he was, even one of the Lamb’s twelve apostles, and therefore to be void of all suspicion and doubt concerning the authority of this book, and not ones to imagine it to be any invention of man, or feigned device, since it was penned by so great an apostle.

Moreover, the authority of this prophecy is confirmed by four reasons in the last chapter. The first is the affirmation of the angel, who saith, ‘ the words are faithful and true,’ Rev. xxii. 6, 7, 8. The second is the authority of the most high God himself in these words. ‘ The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his

‘ angel to shew unto his servants the things
‘ which must shortly be fulfilled,’ Rev. xxii.
6, 7. The third is the testimony of Jesus,
who pronounceth them blessed which keep
the words of this prophecy. For saith he,
‘ Behold I come shortly: blessed is he that
‘ keepeth the words of this prophecy.’—
The fourth and last is the witness of John,
in these words, ‘ I am John which heard
‘ and saw these things.’ Now it may be
demanded, what is the cause that here are
so many things heaped up for the confirma-
tion of the authority of this book. Surely
we must think there is some special cause
and reason of it. For the Holy Ghost doth
not use to deal so much and so earnestly in
a matter, but upon great cause. We may
easily gather what the cause is. The book
painteth out the whore of Babylon, and
the whole kingdom of the great Antichrist,
together with all Satan’s cunning and slight
therein, and for this cause Satan hath la-
boured especially to weaken the credit and
authority of this book. He by some means
in old time prevailed thus far, that even a-
mong some churches of true Christians, the
authority and truth of it was doubted of.
The Holy Ghost did well foresee the prac-
tice of Satan, and therefore bringeth the
more reasons for the confirmation thereof.
If the credit and authority of this book

should never have been impugned, there needed not any such special confirmation. But now, God be thanked, there is no question or controversy concerning the authority of this prophecy. It is received as authentic by the common consent of all the churches. Almost all the ancient fathers do acknowledge it to be canonical. The new writers do with one voice give consent and approbation unto it. The Papists themselves do acknowledge it to be the sacred and undoubted word of God, though of all scriptures they cannot endure it should be mentioned, because it cutteth them so near the bone. Moreover, it may not be omitted, that God is called the Lord God of the holy prophets, which proveth that this prophecy is of equal authority with the prophecies which were of old, in as much as the same God is the author of it. And this book is to be held in the same account with the books of Moses, and of the prophets, for all things contained in it shall as certainly be fulfilled in their times, as theirs were. In Isaiah, in Jeremiah, in Ezekiel, in Daniel, and in the rest we find many things, which the Lord shewed by them long before they came to pass. Likewise there are many things fore-shewed and fore-prophesied in this book, which in their time shall be assuredly fulfilled. Nay, we

see and know that many things here foretold, are already fulfilled, and some things are come to pass even in our days. He that shall look into the times that are past, since this prophecy was given, shall find that all things have fallen out agreeable to the prophecy of this book. And surely if there were no other thing to persuade us touching the authority thereof, this might suffice, that every thing hath fallen out just and true, as the prophecy did fore-show. It is our great negligence, that we do not clearly see so much. And I do humbly entreat all the people of God to look more diligently and narrowly into it in all time to come. And thus much as concerning the circumstances.

Now as concerning the book itself, it may very fitly be divided into three visions, as it were into three general parts. The first vision is contained in the three first chapters. The second vision is contained in the next eight chapters following, from the fourth to the twelfth chapter. And the last vision is contained in all the chapters following, from the twelfth to the end.

As concerning the first vision, my purpose is not to stand much upon it, because it is plain and easy to understand, and because it containeth no prophecies of things to come, but only openeth the present state

of the church at that time; and also because I have already touched the sum of it in handling the circumstantial points, I will therefore content myself with a very brief opening and resolution of it, beginning at the first chapter.

C H A P. I.

Contents of the first Chapter.

THE first chapter containeth four principle things; *viz.*

The title of the book.

The salutation of the churches.

The manner of John's calling to receive this prophecy.

The description of Christ, the person that called him.

The title of the book is set down in these words: 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him.'

It containeth three things: *First*, The Author of the book, which is Jesus Christ, receiving it from God the Father.

Secondly, The end and use of this book, which is, to shew unto all the servants of

God, the things which must shortly come to pass, Rev. i. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Thirdly, The singular fruit and benefit which the church shall receive by it, in these words: ‘Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy,’ &c.

The salutation is in these words, ‘John to the seven churches which are in Asia, grace be with you and peace,’ &c. It containeth a description of the Trinity, or three persons in the Godhead. The Father is described of his eternity, namely, to be he ‘which is, which was, and which is to come.’

The Holy Ghost is described of his divers gifts and operations, and therefore is called the seven Spirits which are before the throne, or which proceed from the throne. But St. John speaketh here of the Holy Ghost, according to the vision shewed him in the fifth chapter, where Christ is said to have seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits which God sent into all the world, Which shall be afterwards treated of.

Jesus Christ is described of his three great offices; of King, Priest and Prophet, and also his glorious power and eternity.

First, Touching his Kingly office, he is called the Prince of the kings of the earth, that is, King of kings, for he is King of

Zion. He is a King to rule and govern his church. He must reign over the house of Judah forever. He must reign over all his enemies, and in the midst of his enemies, even till he have trod them all under his feet. And this benefit we have by it, that we are made kings in him, in this life to reign over our corrupt affections, and after this life to reign as crowned kings forever with him, in infinite glory and endless felicity.

Secondly, Touching his Priest-hood, he is said to love us, and wash us from our sins in his blood, Rev. i. 5. For he is our only High-Priest, which 'by his own blood hath once entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' Heb. ix. 12. 'He only it is, which through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, to purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.' So, ~~then~~ by virtue of his Priesthood and sacrifice, we are reconciled unto God, have free access unto the throne of grace, and are made priests in him to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through him: 'For he hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father,' Rev. i. 6.

Thirdly, Concerning his Prophatical office, he is called 'that faithful Witness,' Rev. i. 5.

For he said to Pilate: 'For this cause
 ' was I born, and for this cause came I into
 ' the world, that I might bear witness unto
 ' the truth,' John xviii. 31. And the apostle saith, ' he witnessed under Pontius
 ' Pilate a good confession,' 1 Tim. vi. 13. So then Jesus Christ is one of those ' three
 ' great witnesses which bear record in hea-
 ' ven.' Jesus Christ is the Prince of Pro-
 phets, even that great Prophet that should
 come into the world, through whom all
 the councils of God are revealed unto us:
 ' He is that only begotten Son, which is
 ' come down from the bosom of his Father,
 ' and hath made known unto us whatso-
 ' ever he hath received of his Father.'

He both by his doctrine, life, and mira-
 cles hath borne witness unto the truth, and
 by the virtue of his prophetic office, the
 whole will of God is made known unto us.
 For God hath sent him as the great Pro-
 phet to instruct the world in righteousness,
 and hath revealed himself to us in him; and
 therefore he is called ' the image of God,
 ' the brightness of his glory, and the ex-
 ' press image of his person,' Col. i. 15.—
 Heb. i. 3. And therefore he said to Philip,
 ' He that hath seen me, hath seen my Fa-
 ' ther also. And if you had known me,
 ' you should have known my Father also.' John xiv. 7.

And again, ' no man knoweth the Fa-

‘ther but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him,’ Matth. xi. 27. Thus we see that Jesus Christ is that faithful witness, and Prince of Prophets, in whom the will of God, and all the counsels of the Father are revealed unto us.

The manner of John’s calling to receive this prophecy, is set down in these words; ‘I John, even your brother, and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the witnessing of Jesus Christ: And I was ravished in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as it had been of a trumpet, saying: I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; and that which thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia,’ &c. Rev. i. 9, 10, 11.

Now out of these three verses five things are to be observed:

First, That John is commanded by the voice of Christ, which he heard behind him as loud as a trumpet, to write and record the visions which he saw, and being so written and recorded, to commend them to all the churches, for the common benefit and use thereof. So that herein John doth nothing of himself, nothing of his own brain, but all things by special war-

rant and authority from Jesus Christ, and that Alpha and Omega, which doth call him, and authorize him to this great business which now he is set about.

Secondly, John's ravishment in spirit, to the end he might be made more capable of all these heavenly visions which were shewed unto him.

Thirdly, His great humiliation, whereby also he was fitted to receive and understand these great mysteries. For 'God will guide the meek in judgment, and teach the humble his ways; yea, his secrets are with them that fear him,' Psal. xxv. 7. Therefore although John was a great apostle, and hath seen wonderful visions, yet he is not thereby puffed up with pride and conceit of himself, but in the greatest humiliation of his soul calleth himself 'a brother and companion of all the faithful, but especially of such as patiently suffer for Jesus Christ and his kingdom,' Rev. i. 9.

Fourthly, The time when John was called, which was the Lord's day.

Fifthly and lastly, The place where he was called, which was the isle of Patmos, as formerly hath been shewed.

The description of Christ, the person that called John to this new office, is set down in the next five verses following,

wherein the excellent glory of Christ's person is described: *First*, From the place where Christ did appear unto him. *Secondly*, From the several parts and members of his royal person, Rev. i. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Thirdly, From his provident care over his true ministers, and all his faithful people.

Touching the place where Christ in a vision did appear to John, he saith, it was in 'the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.' For saith he, 'I turned back to see the voice that spake with me, and when I was turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like the Son of man,' &c. The seven golden candlesticks are interpreted by Christ himself in the last verse of the chapter, to be the seven churches. The churches are said to be of gold, because Christ delighteth in them as we do in gold; he valueth every true member thereof as we do gold; for every believer is all glorious within; every true Christian is very fair and beautiful; every regenerate man is as gold, even as most pure gold.

It is said afterward, that Christ walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, Rev. i. 11—13: that is, he is always present with his church, to feed it, govern it, defend it, and comfort it. The

prophet saith that Christ hath seven eyes which go through the whole world; whereby is signified his watchful providence for his church; for he is always looking out for the good of it, to defend and protect it against all adversary power. Which thing was figured in the rams skins which covered the ark, to defend it against all violence of wind and weather. Even so the merciful protection of Christ, as it were the continual covering of his church.

As touching the parts and members of his royal person, he is described of his head, and hair, of his face, of his eyes, of his voice, of his feet, of his garments, and of his girdle.

As concerning his head and hair, they are said to be as 'white as wool, and as snow,' which signifieth his great wisdom and knowledge, to perform all things in his church, for wisdom and knowledge for the most part do accompany white heads and gray hairs.

'His face shineth as the sun in his strength:' which signifieth that Christ is the same to his church, that the sun is to the world. For as the sun lighteneth the whole world with his brightness, so Christ with the brightness of his face enlighteneth whole chur ch.

'His eyes are like a flame of fire:' that

is, exceeding bright, and piercing into all places, yea the very heart of men, for nothing is hid from his sight, with whom we have to do. He hath eagles eyes to foresee all dangers intended and plotted against his church, that he may in due time prevent them.

His voice is compared 'to the sound of many waters,' because it should sound throughout all the world by the preaching of the gospel. Waters is expounded, Rev. xvii.15. of multitudes, nations, and tongues. Christ's voice therefore is like many waters, because his voice should go through many countries and kingdoms.

His feet are compared to 'fine brass;' to denote both the perfection of all his ways, and also his mighty power, to tread down all his enemies.

' He is clothed with a garment down to ' ground,' to denote that he walked as King and Priest in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. For kings and priests in old time did wear long garments, especially in the execution of their offices.

' He is girded about the paps with a golden girdle:' for as kings and priests did gird their garments close unto them, lest otherwise they might be hindered in the execution of their offices; so Christ girdeth himself close to his business; for he is

no idle beholder of the state of his church, but one that continually worketh out the good thereof.

Concerning his provident care over his faithful ministers, he is said to carry them in his right hand; for 'He had in his right hand seven stars,' Rev. i. 16. that is, the ministers of the churches.

As Christ saith, 'The seven stars are the angels;' that is, the ministers of the seven churches. Ministers are compared to stars, because they should shine as bright stars in this dark world, both by life and doctrine.

Christ is said to hold them in his right hand, because he always defended them against the malice and fury of the world, which of all others is most outrageously bent against them, and their favourites.

But let men take heed of over-bold presuming to pull the stars out of Christ's right-hand, lest they smart for it. The world is very busy this way, they think to wring them out of his hands: but alas! poor souls, they are not able, he holdeth too fast, who can pull them out of his right hand? If they continue bold, and busy this way, they may happen at last to take a bear by the tooth, and peradventure pull an old house over their heads.

Another reason why Christ is said to hold the seven stars in his right-hand, is because

he worketh by them, and their ministry, as an artificer with his tool in his right-hand. The things which Christ hath done by these instruments are glorious and admirable. For by the ministry of the gospel he hath converted many sinners, and saved many souls, then the which nothing can be more honourable and wonderful; and therefore the word of God which is the ministers weapon, is compared to 'a sharp two-edged sword, which came out of Christ's mouth.' Now unto all this may be added that Christ saith; 'he was dead, but now alive,' because he died and rose again. And also that he saith, 'he had the keys of hell and death,' that is, authority and power over hell and damnation. For he hath absolute power over hell and damnation; for he hath absolute power to open and shut, bind and loose, and therefore it is written, 'he hath the key of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.' All this setteth forth the great power and glory of Christ's person, and all aimeth at this mark and end, to commend unto us the authority of this book, because it cometh from a person of so great dignity and excellency. Last of all, it remaineth to shew how John was affected with this vision, wherein Christ did so gloriously appear unto him; for he

faith, ' When I saw him I fell at his feet as ' dead.' Wherein he sheweth how greatly he was amazed and daunted with the sight of Christ's most glorious personage. He was stricken with such an astonishment and fear, that there was almost no life or spirit left in him, and all this was to humble him and to strike him down even to the ground, in as much as by it, he findeth his own weakness and imperfection; not capable of such a sight, so far as to endure it. It was no doubt profitable, or rather necessary that this holy servant of God should thus be humbled and made fit to receive this Revelation with the greater reverence from his great Lord and master: And also it maketh much for our profit, as appeareth in that every part of this vision is rehearsed in the epistles to the churches. But to conclude, John being thus humbled and cast down in himself, is comforted and raised up by Christ, ' who laid his right hand on him, and will- ' ed him to fear nothing,' for faith he, ' I ' am the First and the Last, and am alive, ' but I was dead, behold, I am alive for ' evermore.' In which words he doth greatly clear up John's heart, and telleth him plainly, that this might and terror of his person is bent only against the wicked enemies of his church, nothing at all against the friends thereof: but contrari-

wise, that all this power and glory, might and majesty is wholly and altogether for the good of his church. Wherein we may clearly see and know to our great comfort that the same arm of God which casteth down the wicked, raiseth up the godly; the same power which woundeth them, healeth us; the same hand which destroyeth them, saveth us; the same might and majesty which hurteth them, helpeth us. For whatsoever is in God, is wholly for his, and wholly against those that are none of his. And thus much concerning the first chapter shall suffice.

CHAP. II. & III.

I Have thought good to handle these two chapters together, and in a general and compendious manner to set down the most special matters contained in them both; not meaning to insist upon every particular, both because these two chapters are plain and easy to understand, and also because they have been sufficiently treated of by many. These two chapters do generally contain seven epistles, written to the seven churches of Asia; wherein the present state of the churches of Asia is very lively de-

scribed, and in them the state of all other churches then militant upon the face of the earth: Every one of these seven epistles containeth four things, *viz.*

First, An exordium or entrance into the matters.

Secondly, A general proposition.

Thirdly, A narration.

Lastly, A conclusion.

The exordium or entrance of every epistle containeth two things, namely, the person to whom the epistle is written, and the person from whom the epistle is written.

The proposition is one and the same in all these epistles, contained in these words, ‘I know thy works.’

The narration containeth the matter of each epistle, and consisteth of commendations, and discommendations; of admonitions, reprehensions, threatenings and promises.

The conclusion of every epistle is one and the same, in these words, ‘Let him that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.’

First, Concerning the person to whom these epistles are sent, he is named in the beginning of every epistle, ‘to be the angel of such and such a church.’ By this word angel, he means not the invisible spirits which we call the angels of heaven, for

the things attributed to these angels, can in no wise agree to the invisible spirits, as to the angels of the several churches, to be neither hot nor cold, to leave their first love, to repent and amend, and sundry such like attributes thro' all these epistles. But by the word angel, he meaneth the minister or pastor of every church, which therefore is called an angel, because he is the minister of God, as the word signifieth. Also because every faithful minister ought to be received and regarded as an angel of God, as the apostle witnesseth of the Galatians, that ' they received him as an angel of God, yea as Christ Jesus.' And he giveth many admonitions in his epistles to this effect; for he would have all faithful and painful ministers to be greatly reverenced and held in double honour; to be acknowledged and had in singular love for their works sake; to be cared for, to be made much of, and to want nothing; For indeed, a good minister is a jewel of price. A good minister is a friend in court, which we say is better then a penny in purse. A good minister is like a candle, which spendeth itself to give light to others. A good minister is like a cock, which by the clapping of his wings awaketh himself, and by his crowing awaketh others. For a good minister, by his private studies, prayers and

An Exposition

ditions, awaketh himself, and by his
public preaching awaketh others. The
ptures affirmeth a good minister to be
very glory of Christ. And again, that
good minister is a singular blessing of
God, 2 Cor. viii. 23. For the Lord himself
h; ' I will take you one of a city, and
you of a tribe, and will bring you to
ision: and I will give you a pastor, ac-
ording to my heart, which shall feed you
with knowledge and understanding.' Jer.
14. Now then if a good minister be so
at a blessing of God, and so valuable a
man, how great is the sin of those which
despise them, and tread their ministry
under foot, as vile and nothing worth?
The Lord Jesus, saith of all such, ' he that
despiseth you despiseth me,' Luke x. 16.
those scoffers and scorners therefore
heed how they despise Christ, for as-
suredly he will not long put it up at their
hands.

Any man demand a reason, why all
the epistles are specially sent and directed
to the angels, or pastors of the churches,
saith John before, Rev. i. 11. is com-
mended to write them to the churches of
I answer, that he writing to the pas-
tors excludeth not the churches, but in
, or under them, he writeth to the
same churches, as plainly it appeareth in

the conclusion of every epistle, when he saith: ' Let him that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.' Then that which is spoken to the angel of the church, is spoken to the church. The reason why the speech is specially directed to the pastor of every church, is because the good or bad state of the church, for the most part dependeth upon the ministers.— For commonly we see it cometh to pass, such a pastor, such a people; such a shepherd, such sheep; such a husbandman, such husbandry. And as the prophet saith, ' Like priest, like people,' Hos. iv. 9. For we may observe in all these epistles, that where the minister is commended, the people are commended; and where the minister is discommended, the people are discommended also: so that they stand and fall, sink and swim together. As concerning the person from whom these epistles are sent, it is Jesus Christ, who is very gloriously described of his divers qualities in the entrance of every one of these epistles: *First*, In the epistles to the church of Ephesus, it is said, ' these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand; and which walketh in the midst of the seven candlesticks.' *Secondly*, In the epistle to the church of Smyrna, ' these things saith he, that is first and last, which was

‘dead, and is alive.’ *Thirdly*, To the church of Pergamos, ‘Thus saith he, ‘which hath a sharp sword with two edges.’ *Fourthly*, To Thyatira, ‘these things saith the Son of God, who hath eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brafs.’ *Fifthly*, To the church of Sardis: ‘These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and seven stars.’ *Sixtly*, To the church of Philadelphia, it is thus said of Christ, ‘These things saith he that is holy and true, which hath the key of David, which openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.’ *Lastly*, To Laodicea, it is thus said, ‘These things saith Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creatures.’

Now then, we do plainly see how gloriously Jesus Christ is described of his several properties in every one of these epistles, and what honourable and magnificent titles are given unto him, and all to this end, to move attention, and to work in us a reverence of so great a personage, that we might more seriously regard, and deeply ponder the things which proceed from so great a majesty; for we see and know by common experience that almost every man’s words are regarded according to the opinion and reverence which is heard of his person. Since then that every one of these epistles,

fronted with this great authority: 'Thus faith the Son of God; thus faith Christ; thus faith Alpha and Omega;' therefore we ought to give diligent heed to the things herein contained. So likewise we read in the *Hebrews*, that after the Holy Ghost had very notably described the person of Christ, and extolled him far above the angels and all other creatures, he giveth the use of it in the beginning of the second chapter, saying, ' therefore we ought to give more diligent heed to his doctrine.' And thus much concerning the *exordium* or entrance of these seven epistles, touching the person to whom, and the person from whom these epistles are sent. Now it followeth to speak a word or two of the general proposition contained in these words, 'I know thy works.' We read in all these epistles, how the Son of God praises some of the churches, and dispraises others; commends some pastors, and discommends others. Now he that will praise or dispraise, must especially look to this, that he be upon a good ground; and therefore Jesus Christ before he enters into any praising or dispraising, commanding or reproofing, doth first protest that he knoweth their works, and is privy to all their particular actions, yea, their very thoughts; and therefore cannot err or be deceived in his cen-

fures. True it is indeed, that men may err in their opinions and censures of others, because they know not mens hearts, and with what affections things are carried. Men, I say, may praise or dispraise too much or too little. But Jesus Christ whose eyes are a flame of fire, and which searcheth the reins, cannot fail one jot, nor err a hairs breadth, as we say, either in commanding or discomanding, and therefore he stoppeth their mouths at the first dash, so as they can have nothing to reply, when he saith, 'I know thy works; I know well enough what thou art, and what thou hast been, I am not deceived in thee, I know thy sitting down and rising up, and am accustomed to all thy ways: and this briefly of the proportion. The narration (as is aforesaid) contained in the matter of the epistles, consisting of praises and dispraises, admonitions, reprehensions, threats and promises.

Touching the first, we find that some churches are highly commended, others wholly discommended; others partly commended, partly discommended. As for example, the pastor and people of Smyrna and Philadelphia, are generally commended for all things, and discommended for nothing, there is no fault found with them; that is no gross fault as in others; for they

were not without common corruptions and infirmities. The minister of Smyrna was a very rare and excellent man, although a poor man with regard to this worlds goods: for Christ faith thus unto him, 'I know ' thy poverty, but thou art rich,' Rev. ii. 9. that is, rich in grace, and the manifold gifts of the Spirit, Thou hast done great service to the church. Thou hast employed thy gifts to the good of many. Thou takest great pains in the ministry, and art greatly blessed in thy labours; for thou hast an excellent flock, a notable good people, and therefore I cannot but greatly commend both thee and them.

The minister of Philadelphia was also a very worthy and notable man; for altho' his gifts were not so great as some others, yet he was very painful and faithful in a little, of whom it is said, 'Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and ' hast not denied my name,' that is, thou art very constant in the profession and practice of Christian religion; and thereupon Christ promised to bless his labours, for saith he, 'I will make them of the synagogue ' of Satan which call themselves Jews, ' and are not, but do lie; behold I say, I ' will make them that they shall come and ' worship before thy feet, and shall know ' that I have loved thee.' Here we do

plainly see how Christ promiseth to bless this man's ministry, for his great care and diligence, altho' he was not of the greatest gifts, for men of greatest gifts are not always most blessed in their labours, for God doth commonly work the greatest things by weak means, that all glory might redound unto him, and no flesh might boast in his sight. For otherwise if men of greatest gifts should always be most blessed in their labours, and win most souls unto God, then we would be ready to ascribe that to men, and their gifts, which is proper to God, and so his praise and glory should be somewhat eclipsed. Thus we see what excellent men the ministers of Smyrna and Philadelphia were, and what excellent people they had in their charges. But on the contrary, the pastor and the people of Sardis and Laodicea, are discommended for all things, and commended for nothing.— Indeed the minister of Sardis had a great name for learning; and other good gifts, but he was grown very idle and negligent, and did little good with his gifts, of whom it is said, 'Thou hast a name that thou 'livest, but thou art dead:' that is, there was no spirit in him, no life of grace, his gifts waxed rusty for want of use, he was fallen asleep: he was fallen away from the grace of God, he was not the wise man

which he had been. Therefore he was admonished to awaken and strengthen the things which remain, which were ready to die.

The minister of Laodicea, and the people also, were grown luke-warm, neither hot nor cold, they were become careless and secure, not caring greatly which end went forward in God's matters, so they might enjoy the present profits and pleasures of this life.

Concerning the pastors and people of Ephesus, Pergamus and Thyatirā, they are partly commended, and partly discommended. These three were reasonably good ministers, and had many good parts in them, and took pains in their charges, although there be some faults found with them. For the minister of Ephesus is commended for six things, for labour, for patience, for zeal, for wisdom, for sincerity, and for courage; but discommended for leaving his first love; that is, for revolting, or somewhat going back, or rather indeed, for cooling in the love and zeal of God. The minister of Pergamus, and people also are greatly commended for their constant profession of the truth in the midst of manifold troubles, and the very heat of persecution. For the rage of the enemies grew so fierce against the profession and professors,

of the gospel, that Antipas, the pastor of Pergamos (as some suppose) was put to death: for Christ saith thus of his church; ‘Thou dwellest where Satan’s throne is; ‘and yet thou keepest my name, and hast ‘not denied my faith, even in those days ‘when Antipas my faithful martyr was ‘slain among you, where Satan dwelleth,’

Rev. ii. 13.

But yet notwithstanding this church is found fault with for some few things, that is two gross faults; the one for suffering the doctrine of Balaam to be broached there by the instruments of Satan; the other that they maintained the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, Rev. ii. 14. The doctrine of Balaam did uphold the lawfulness of eating things sacrificed to idols, and of committing fornication; ‘for he taught Balac the king of Moab, thus to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel.’ The doctrine of the Nicolaitans did uphold the common use of women, that is, that women might be made common. These two most gross and absurd doctrines were suffered and maintained in the church of Pergamos. As concerning the church of Thyatira, they are greatly commended for their love and service to the church; for their faith, patience, and manifold works, and especially for their constant proceeding in

religion and godliness, and that with increase; for of this church it is said, 'I know thy love and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and that they are more at the last than at the first,' Rev. ii. 19. But this church is discommended for suffering the wicked woman Jezebel, (that is, a false prophetess, who had craftily crept into this church) to teach and seduce the people of God in that congregation, teaching the same false doctrine that Balaam did at Pergamos, Rev. ii. 10. which was, that it was lawful to commit fornication, and to eat meats sacrificed unto idols: hitherto concerning the praises and dispraises of the churches. Now followeth to speak of the admonitions.

First, The church of Ephesus having fallen from her first love, is admonished to remember from whence she was fallen, to repent, and do her first works. Also the church of Smyrna is admonished and exhorted to stand fast in the midst of those persecutions and troubles, which should be raised up against it by the emperor Trajan, and continue for the space of ten years: they are therefore exhorted and encouraged by our Lord Jesus, not to fear the things which they should suffer; for although the devil and his instruments should have scope to persecute and imprison them

for ten days, that is, ten years, according to the prophetical account; yet if they had continued faithful to the death, they should have had the crown of life. The church of Pergamos suffering and maintaining the doctrine of Balaam and Nicolaitans, is admonished to repent and amend. The church of Thyatira, which suffered the false doctrine of Jezebel, is admonished to look to herself and to hold fast the truth of religion. Sardis being dull and dead, is admonished to awake and strengthen the things which remain that were ready to die. Philadelphia is admonished to hold that which they had, that no man take their crown. Laodicea being neither hot nor cold, but luke-warm, is admonished to be zealous and amend. And although they thought their state good enough, being puffed up with pride, yet they are charged to be poor, naked, and blind; and thereupon counselled and admonished to buy spiritual gold, that they may be rich; and spiritual garments to hide their nakedness, and spiritual eye-salve to anoint their eyes, that they may see.

Concerning reprehensions; Ephesus is reproved for going backward; Pergamos and Thyatira for suffering and maintaining corrupt doctrine, as hath already been shewn. Sardis for dulness, and deafness,

and unsoundness in their manner of worshipping God, Laodicea for luke-warmness and self-conceit.

Touching threats, Ephesus is threatened, that except they repent and do their first works, their candlestick should be removed out of his place; that is, the church should be translated to some other place, but not destroyed: for God doth remove, but not destroy his candlesticks. Pergamos is threatened, that unless they did speedily repent, Jesus Christ should come shortly and fight against them with the sword of his mouth. Thyatira is threatened, that except they repent them of their works, they should be cast into a bed of affliction, and all their favourites should be slain with death. Sardis is threatened, that if they did not watch and awake, Christ would come suddenly upon them as a thief, and they should not know what hour he would come.

Concerning promises, they are very great and large; for everlasting joy, and the very fulness of glory is promised to all that fight the good fight of faith, and overcome in the spiritual battle against the flesh, the world, and the devil. Ephesus is promised, that if they fight it out courageously and constantly to the end, they should eat of the tree

of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Smyrna is promised in like case, that they should not be hurt of the second death.—Pergamus likewise is promised to eat of the manna that is hid, and to have the white stone of victory given them. Thyatira is promised to have power given them to rule over nations and to be lightened with heavenly brightness, like the morning star.—Sardis is promised to be cloathed with white array, that is, with heavenly glory, and to have their name continued in the book of life. Philadelphia is promised to have a pillar made in the temple of God; that is, a firm and unmoveable place of eternal glory. Laodicea is promised to sit with Christ, and to sit with him upon his throne for evermore. Thus we see what great and precious promises are made to all churches that fight and overcome in this their spiritual battle and conflict.

Concerning the conclusion, it is one and the same to all the seven churches. Wherein they are exhorted, that such as have ears to hear, should hear, ponder, and consider all the aforesaid praises and dispraises, admonitions, reprehensions, threats, and promises. And it is therefore said, such as have ears, because there are very few to be found that have circumcised and sancti-

fied ears, to hear and understand heavenly things. This is proper to the elect, this is but to whom it is given. And thus briefly and generally we see what was the present state of every one of the churches of Asia, unto which this prophecy was to be sent: so that by them we may see in what state the universal church militant was at that time. For as some of these seven as yet stood firm, and others had much declined, so was it with all other churches.

Hitherto concerning the first vision, containing generally the inscription of this book; John's salutation to the churches; John's new calling; the excellency of Christ which called him; and the present state of the church. Now we proceed to the second vision, contained in the next eight chapters to the twelfth, wherein is shewed, what should be the future state of the church in all ages, even unto the end of the world.

CHAP. IV.

THE principle thing contained in this fourth chapter, is a description of the person of God, the author of this book, who is most gloriously described of that

excellent glory that is in himself, and of his royal throne which he sitteth upon, and of his goodly retinue, and troops of saints and angels attending about his most glorious throne. Whereunto is added the diverse qualities, both of angels and saints, both in themselves and their own natures: as also in their manner of praising and worshipping of God. This is the general sum and sense of this chapter.

But for the better clearing and more full opening of, I will come to the words of the text, and open them as they lie in order.

‘ After this I looked, and behold a door was open in heaven, and the first voice I heard, was as it were of a trumpet, talking with me, saying, come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must be done hereafter,’ Rev. iv. 1.

These words, *after this*, have relation to the first vision spoken of before, as if he should say, after I had received the former vision, concerning the present state of the church, now I had another vision concerning the future state thereof; and therefore he saith, ‘ a door was opened in heaven,’ that he might come in and see all these things which should be revealed to him. For the opening of the door in heaven doth here signify the unlocking of heavenly

things unto John, or his entrance into them: for so the word door is taken, 2 Cor. iii. 12.—Rev. iii. 8. After the opening of the door, he is called up with a loud voice, like a trumpet, saying, ‘ Come up hither;’ for although the door was opened, yet dare he not enter in till he was called and commanded to come in. For in these cases he doth not presume in any thing as of himself, without special warrant and direction, as the scripture saith, ‘ No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as Aaron was,’ Heb. v. 4. The voice that calleth him, is like a trumpet that is loud and shrill, that he might be stirred up more diligently to attend unto the contemplation of these great secrets which should be revealed unto him. This voice commandeth him to come up hither: which sheweth that John was wrapt up in the Spirit unto the heavens to see this vision. This voice promiseth ‘ to shew him things which must be done hereafter,’ that is, that he should be made acquainted with the future state of the church, as already he was with the present state thereof. ‘ And immediately I was ravished in the Spirit, and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat upon the throne,’ Rev. iv. 2.

Upon this sudden and extraordinary cal-

ling by so heavenly and loud a voice, John was forthwith ravished in Spirit. For as the prophet Ezekiel was by the Spirit in the visions of God, carried from Chaldea to Jerusalem; so this holy apostle is carried by the Spirit in the visions of God into heaven, and by the same Spirit is made fit and capable of all these heavenly visions which should be shewed him. So that in all this we do plainly and clearly see, that John hath, as it were, a further calling and admittance from heaven to behold and see these wonderful secrets which now are to be imparted unto him.

‘Behold a throne, &c.’ Here beginneth the description of the most high and glorious majesty of God, who is described after the manner of earthly kings and judges sitting upon their thrones and judgment-seats. For he is King of Zion, and Judge of all the world.

‘And he that sat, was to look upon like unto a jasper stone and a sardine, and there was a rainbow round about the throne like an emerald,’ Rev. iv. 3.

God, for his admirable glory and beauty, is here compared to two most precious stones. The one, which is the jasper, being of a perfect green colour, as Philosophers write: the other, which is the Sardine, being of a most bright red colour. Nothing

can sufficiently resemble the glory of God, being infinite; but these things being the most precious under the sun, do in a manner shadow it unto us.

There was a rainbow round about the throne, which signify, that God's throne in glory and beauty doth far excel all other thrones of mortal princes; yea, even that of Solomon, which was of pure ivory, or rather it may signify, that although God in himself is most glorious and admirable, yet he keepeth promise and covenant with the sons of men. For the rainbow was a sign of his covenant, as appeareth, Gen. ix. 13. and assuredly God will be mindful of his covenant to a thousand generations.— This rain-bow is said to be like an emerald, which is always of a fresh green colour, signifying that God's covenant of grace and mercy towards his church, is always fresh and green, and his goodness towards his people perpetual and unchangeable.

Moreover, God is described of his glorious retinue, and heavenly company about him, for it is said, "Round about the throne were twenty-four seats, and upon the seats twenty-four elders:" Rev. iv. 4. which signify the whole church, both militant and triumphant, both Jews and Gentiles, and therefore called twenty-four, because the church of the Jews grew out of

twelve patriarchs; and the church of the Gentiles out of twelve apostles. And as the glory and pomp of mortal kings is set forth by their troops and trains of nobles, and other excellent personages; so the glory of God (which in itself can receive no increase) is to our capacity commended and set forth by his goodly companies of saints and angels. These twenty-four elders are cloathed in white raiment, which signifieth their righteousness, as it is expounded, Rev. xix. 8. *not inherant, but imputative:* for they having no righteousness of their own. Christ's righteousness is imputed unto them through faith, and through faith is made theirs. ' For Abraham believed and it was imputed to him for righteousness.'

These twenty-four elders had on their heads crowns of gold, which signify their victories over the world, for all the elect overcome the world through faith, as St. John teacheth; and not the world only, but even the flesh and the devil also, and therefore the crown and garland of victory belongeth unto them as most valiant conquerors.

Moreover it is said, that ' out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thundering, and voices,' Rev. iv. 5. which signify his terror and fearful power in the preaching of the law, for the preaching of

the law, is as it were a voice of lightning and thundering. The powerful preaching of the law, is the very thundering of hell, and lightning of the wrath of God upon all impenitent sinners; and therefore at the delivery of the law, there were lightnings and thunderings, and mount Sinai itself did tremble and shake.

Further, it is said, 'There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.'— These seven lamps which are interpreted to be the seven Spirits of God, do signify the preaching of the gospel, and the manifold graces and gifts of the Spirit, which are given to the church by the means thereof. For the gospel giveth a cheerful and comfortable light, being the ministry of the Spirit, as the apostle saith, and therefore is resembled to seven lamps. So then from the throne, that is, from the presence of God, proceedeth both law and gospel, and the ministry of them both for the saving of souls. And all this maketh much for the setting forth of God's glory and majesty, being the mark here aimed at.

'And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal,' Rev. iv. 6.

This sea of glass is the world, which is fitly compared to a sea, because it is full of

storms, tempests and waves, that are continually raised up in it.

It is full of rocks, upon which many dash, and make shipwreck.

It is compared to a sea of glass, for the brittleness, changes, and uncertainty of all things in the world.

It is said to be before the throne like crystal, because the all-seeing God doth as clearly behold from his throne all the thoughts, words, and works of the sons of men, and all other particular actions of all his creatures under the sun, as we behold our face in a glass. ‘For all things are naked, and as it were laid out in anatomy unto his eyes, with whom we have to do.’

Moreover it is said, that ‘in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind,’ Rev. iv. 6. These four beasts do signify the angels of heaven, the invisible and elect angels, as it is expounded, Ezek. x. 20. where the prophet in a vision feeth four beasts, as it were bearing up and drawing God’s chariot of triumph. And at the twentieth verse he saith expressly, that he at last understood they were the cherubims; the first and tenth chapters of Ezekiel being thoroughly examined, clear this point. The reason why the angels are

called by the name of beasts, is, because in the next verse they are compared to beasts for their qualities of certain beasts. They are named four in number, being otherwise innumerable, because they are likened to four different beasts.

The angels are said to have eyes before and behind, for their great vigilance over the church, and every member thereof, and because they are endued with knowledge of things past and things to come; and last of all, because they see and discern almost all actions under the sun, upward and downward, backward and forward.

‘And the first beast was like a lion, the second like a calf,’ &c. Rev. iv. 7.

Here the angels are compared to four several beasts; to a lion, for strength and courage; to a calf or an ox, for service and use; to a beast, having the face of a man, for wisdom; to an eagle, for swiftness and readiness to execute the will of God. And moreover, because the eagles soar aloft, and fly to a great height, we are given to understand, that the heavenly spirits are much in celestial contemplation, and do receive the knowledge of hidden secrets and councils, for they are much aloft about the throne of God, and many high and deep secrets are opened unto them.

* And the four beasts had each of them
* six wings about him, and they were full
* of eyes within, &c. Rev. iv. 8.

This maketh it very plain, that by these beasts are understood the six angels, because he ascribeth unto every one of them six wings a-piece. For the angels are described with wings, both in the first and tenth of Ezekiel, before mentioned, and also in the sixth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, where the seraphim are said to have six wings a-piece, two to cover their faces, two to cover their feet, and two to fly with. And they have two wings to cover their faces, because they are not able to endure the inconceivable brightness and glory of God, for he dwelleth in light that is inaccessible. They have two wings to cover their feet, because mortal men are not able to behold the brightness that is in heaven. For we read, that many have been astonished and dazzled with the glory and brightness of angels, so glorious creatures are they. They have two wings to fly with, to note their prompt obedience and readiness to execute the commandments of God, as formerly was shewed. Moreover, the angels are said to have wings, and to fly swiftly; because God by them doth speedily dispatch many purposes, actions and services here below: and for this cause the

scripture affirmeth, that ' he rideth upon the cherubims: that he dwelleth between the cherubims; and that he maketh the clouds his chariots, and walketh upon wings of the wind.' For as earthly kings in their journey are carried in their most sumptuous coaches, drawn by the most excellent horses, to dispatch great business, and many weighty affairs in their dominions; so the visions in Ezekiel do shew that the immortal King is carried most swiftly in his chariot of triumph, drawn by cherubims, as it were by beasts, to direct and over-rule all actions under the sun. Moreover, these angels are said to ' be full of eyes within,' Rev. iv. 8. to denote not only their fulness of knowledge, but also their inward sight into all heavenly things; yea, even such as are most secret and hid; for they are of all other creatures most inward with God. None of his children know so much of his council as they.— Furthermore, the angels are here said to praise God ' incessantly, day and night; saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, which is, and which is to come,' Rev. iv, 8; where we may clearly see, that the angels praise and worship God in a burning zeal without weariness. For they are not as men, which through their great corruption, are full of

dulness and weariness in God's worship; but they do always serve him with indefatigable desires, and therefore are called seraphims, because they burn in the zeal of God; and cherubims, because their delight is to approach near unto him, and to be always about his throne, yea even in his chamber of presence. They do double and treble this word *holy*, and warble much upon it, because they know full well that he is righteous in all his ways; and holy in all his works, and that all his proceedings and judgments are even. Then weighed in the balance of justice and equity, when to man's sense and judgment of reason, they seem nothing less. For his judgments are as a great depth which man's reason cannot sound. Further, we see that when these beasts, that is, the angels, 'gave glory, and honour, and thanks unto God, &c. the twenty-four elders also fell down before him, and worshipped him that liveth for evermore.' Where we may see, that both saints and angels, do jointly praise and magnify God, and him alone, 'even that God which liveth for evermore; even that God which was, which is, and which is to come,' that is, the eternal and everlasting God. For the scripture saith, 'Praise him, O ye saints, and praise him, O ye angels, that excel in strength. And

‘ the twenty-four elders cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, &c.’ Wherein we see, that all the elect do empty themselves of all worthiness to have any glory; acknowledging that their crowns of glory are God’s free gift, and that the praise thereof belongeth only to him and nothing to themselves. And indeed this is the right manner of worshiping God, humbly to ascribe all glory to him, and all shame to ourselves, to give all to him to whom all is due, and nothing to ourselves, who have nothing; for nothing can be given or taken out of nothing.

Now then, to conclude and wind up this fourth chapter, we do clearly see the sum of the whole is, that the door of heaven was opened unto John, and that he was let in, and called up into the chamber of presence by a very loud voice, there to take notice of the future state of the church, and that the person which thus called him was Almighty God himself, who is so glorious described of his throne, his troops and trains of saints and angels, as we have already heard. And all this is to commend and set forth the authority of this book, whose Author is so excellent, yea, super-excellent.

C H A P. V.

AFTER this vision containing the glory of the divine majesty was shewed unto John, that he might know from what fountain this prophecy was derived, now in this fifth chapter is taught and shewed by what means and by whose mediation, the knowledge of such hidden mysteries were revealed unto the church; namely, by the means and mediation of Jesus Christ, in whom only the councils and secrets of God the Father are opened, and made known unto men. For he is the great Prophet and Doctor of the church, which is come down from the bosom of his Father, and 'hath made known unto us whatsoever he 'hath received of his Father, as he himself 'testifieth.' And the church is commanded by 'a voice from heaven to hear him, 'and him alone.'

This fifth chapter containeth three things, generally, Rev. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

First, A description of the book, which was in the right hand of God.

Secondly, A description of Jesus Christ, who receiveth it at the right hand of his Father and openeth it.

Thirdly, A description of those most glorious praises which are given to Christ by

the angels, saints, and all the creatures in heaven and earth.

‘ I saw in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, a book written within, and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.’ Rev. v. 1.

By this book here mentioned, is meant this present book of Revelation, as it shall plainly appear in the next chapter, when we come to the opening of the seven seals thereof. For the things which fall out, upon the opening of the several seals, do plainly declare, that all is meant of the particular matters contained in this book.

This book is said to be in the right hand of him that sitteth upon the throne, because all the secrets revealed in it, come from the counsel and decree of the most high God, and are ordered by his mere direction and providence.

It is called a written book, to shew that the things contained in it, are so firmly decreed in the counsel of God, that none of them shall fail, but come to pass, and be fulfilled in their season. They are such as we may write of, as we use to say: and therefore the certainty of them, they are here said to be written in a book.

This book is said to be written within and without, for the multitude and variety of matters contained in it. For there were

both many and great things which should fall out in the world, from the time that John received the prophecy, unto the end of the world.

This book is sealed with seven seals, that is to say, perfectly sealed, because the things contained herein, are counsels and secrets, only known to God, till it pleased him to reveal them to his church by his Son. The elect angels knew nothing of the things written in this book, before the seals were opened.

‘ And I saw a strong angel, which pro-
claimed with a loud voice; who is worthy
to open the book, and to loose the seals
thereof.’ Rev. v. 2.

Here is proclamation made to all creatures; that if there were any manner of persons in heaven or earth, among men or angels, that would take upon them to open and expound this book, that they should come forth and shew themselves, and be very willing and gladly heard. But alas, the next verse doth shew, that ‘ none in heaven or earth was able to open the book and expound it; whereupon John wept very much, because no man was found worthy to open and interpret this book.’ Rev. v. 3.

The cause of John’s weeping and lamenting, was for fear the church should be

deprived of such profitable and excellent things as he knew were contained in this book. Such was his love to the church; such was his zeal and care for the people of God. An example worthy of all imitation to mourn and weep for the concealing of the book of God, and to rejoice in the opening of it. But Papists and Atheists are of a contrary mind, for they rejoice in the concealing and keeping close of the scriptures, and are much grieved with the opening and revealing thereof; because thereby their hypocrisy and villany is detected and discarded.

Upon this, one of the elders said unto John, weep not: behold, the Lion which is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath obtained to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof: *Rev. v. 5.*

Here we see how John is comforted and cheered up by one of the elders, being now very penive and sad; and is willed to pluck up a good heart; and to be of good cheer, for he could tell him good news; to wit, of one that could open and expound this book, and all the serets in it; and that is Jesus Christ, the great revealer of secrets, and only expounder of all riddles, and hidden mysteries, as before hath been sp̄ken.

Jesus Christ is here said to be of the

An Exposition

be of Judah, because he is lineally descended of that tribe, according to the flesh, d his human nature.

He is compared unto a lion, by allusion to Jacob's words in his last will and testament, concerning Judah, namely, that ' he hould couch as a lion, and as a lioness, and none should stir him.' He is fitly compared to a lion, for his great and admirable power and strength, for he reigneth d must reign over all his enemies, and the midst of all his enemies, till he hath made all his enemies under his feet. He is lled the root of David, both here, and lo in the xxii. chapter of this book, verse i. because he sprung out of David, the n of Jesse, as a branch out of his root, as e prophet did foretel, that ' a rod should come forth of the stock of Jesse, and a graft should grow out of his roots.' And e apostle saith, that ' Christ was made of he seed of David, according to the flesh.'

' Then, saith John, I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and of the elders, stood a lamb, is though he had been killed, which had even horns, and seven eyes, which are he seven spirits of God sent into all the world.' Rev. v. 6.

Here John taketh a view and sight of sus Christ, from the very midst of the

throne, and of the four beasts, and the elders. Christ doth not appear about the throne, as do the saints and angels, which are but ministers and ministering spirits: but in the very midst of the throne, and the four beasts, &c. because he is God everlasting, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father; 'in whom, as the apostle saith, dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily or essentially.' And here afterwards the same worship and honour is ascribed unto him both by the saints and angels, which before is ascribed unto God the Father.

Christ is here compared to a lamb, for his innocency; for the scripture saith, 'he was a sheep dumb before his shearers. He is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. He is the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world.' He is compared to a lion, for his great and incomparable strength in conquering hell, death, and damnation, and all infernal power. And to a lamb, because he hath dispatched all this upon the cross, by the sacrifice of himself once offered: for he did never more lively shew forth his lion-like power, than when he was as a lamb slain and sacrificed upon the cross.

This Lamb Christ is here said to have seven horns, which signify his manifold

power, or fulness of power, or perfect power, according as this metaphor or borrowed speech of horn, is usually so taken in all the scriptures. This Lamb is also said to have seven eyes, which are interpreted to be the seven spirits of God: that is, the manifold graces and gifts of the Spirit; which he giveth unto his church. Now then to conclude this point; for as much as the number of seven in this book is a number of perfection and always noteth perfection, therefore by Christ's seven horns, and seven eyes, we may, and that soundly understand his perfect power, and his perfect sight and knowledge in all things. For his seven eyes are so taken in the third chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah, where it is said: 'Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.' Meaning, that Jesus Christ, the corner-stone of the church, should be full of eyes, to look out for the good of his church, and to give light to all others: for he is the life and light of the world.

' And he came, and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.' Rev. v. 7.

Here Jesus Christ takes the book out of his Father's hand, purposing both to open it, and expound it: For he is the only expounder of the law, and the best interpreter of his Father's will.

Hereupon it is said, that ' the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb.' Rev. v. 8. to testify their thankfulness, and inward joy and rejoicing, that the Son of God would take upon him this office, which none other would or could perform.

Moreover, by their falling down and worshipping him, they do plainly testify, that he is God over all, to be blessed for ever. For otherwise the angels of heaven, both cherubim's and seraphim's, would not thus fall down and worship him, ascribing unto him both deity and divine honour.

Consider then how great he is, of whom it is said: ' Let all the angels of God worship him.' Psal xcvii. 7.

Moreover, these angels and saints are said to ' have every one harps and golden vials, full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.' Rev. v. 8.

These harps do signify the sweet consent and harmony both of men and angels, in sounding forth the praises of the Lamb: for herein the whole church both militant and triumphant do accord and tune together, ' as many harpers harping upon their harps;' Rev. xiv. 2. as is written also in another place.

Hereby also they do plainly testify that inward peace and spiritual joy, which all

the faithful have through Christ, which is more sweet and delightsome to the soul, than any music is unto the ears.

The vials full of odours, are expounded to be the prayers of the saints, which are therefore compared to odours, because they smell sweet in the nostrils of God, and are more fragrant then any nosegay or perfume whatsoever: for he taketh great pleasure in the prayers of his people; especially when they come out of golden vials, that is, sanctified hearts and consciences; for every sanctified heart is a golden heart in the sight of God, and every regenerate conscience is a jewel of price, gilt with gold, and enamelled with pearl. For this cause the holy man David wisheth earnestly, that his heart might be so renewed and cleansed inwardly, that his ‘prayer might be directed as incense in God’s sight, and the lifting up of his hands as a sweet smelling sacrifice.’

Psal. xiv. 1.

Furthermore, ‘these saints and angels do sing a new song.’ That is, they do sing to the praises of the Lamb with renewed affections, and unwearied desires. Their inward joy continueth always fresh and green as the bay-tree: They never wither or wax weary of the service of God: Their song is evermore new, and therefore evermore delightsome. For the more new any

thing is, the more pleasant and delectable: for men are not affected with old, but altogether with new things.

Now then, Jesus Christ having taken this book into his hand to open and expound, is applauded into by the general consent and voices of the whole church: for say they, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.' Wherein they do all with common consent, give their voices unto Christ, acknowledging him to be the only fit person in heaven or earth, to take upon him the function of opening a book so closed, so clasped, so shut, so sealed; and they do yield a reason of their proceedings, because (say they) 'thou wast killed, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' Meaning hereby, that he was put to death, to pay the price of our redemption, in whom all believers, both Jews and Gentiles are saved. Their reason then is this: he that hath died, and risen again, and is now exalted far above all principalities and powers, &c. is the most fit instrument to open and interpret this book: but thou, O Christ the Lamb of God, art such an one; therefore thou of all others art most meet to take the matter upon thee, and to enter into this business. Further,

they amplify their reason thus: that ' he hath made us of slaves and servants, kings: and of profane persons, priests unto the most high God.' And last of all, that ' we shall reign upon the earth.' Not meaning hereby, that we shall reign as earthly kings, or only enjoy an earthly kingdom. For out of all doubt the saints shall reign with Christ in the heavens for evermore. But here is mention made of reigning in the earth, because after this life God's children shall have the fruition and inheritance both of heaven and earth; that is to say, ' that new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness:' 2 Pet. iii. 12. for the heavens and the earth being regenerated and purged from corruption, shall be the portion of the saints, and the habitation of the elect for evermore.

After all this, ' John heareth the voice of innumerable angels besides the four beasts.' Rev. v. 11. That is, the cherubims and seraphims, or chief angels; that is, angels deputed to chief offices, round about the throne, which all ' with a loud voice do acknowledge the Lamb which was killed, to be worthy of all honour, glory, and praise,' &c. Rev. v. 12. And not only these innumerable angels, being twenty thousand times ten thousand, but also all other creatures both in heaven and

‘ earth:’ As the sun, moon, and stars, the fishes in the sea, and the beasts in the earth, do all in their kind sing the same song, acknowledge ‘ all honour and glory, praise and power, to belong unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for evermore.’ Rev. v. 13. For although the creature is as yet subject to the bondage of corruption, and therefore groaneth and travelleth in pain, waiting when the sons of God shall be revealed, yet it standeth in assured expectation of restitution to liberty and incorruption; and therefore here all the creatures do praise the Lamb for that restoration which they had so lovingly and wisely looked for. ‘ And the four beasts said, Amen.’ That is, they do subscribe to those praises which the creature yieldeth to their Creator. And not only the angels do subscribe and consent unto it, but the four and twenty elders also, that fall down and worship him that liveth for evermore.’ So that the Lamb is praised and worshipped of all hands, both of men and angels; and all other creatures as God everlasting, and blessed for evermore.

C H A P. VI.

IN the fourth chapter we have heard the description of God the Father, which holdeth the sealed book in his right hand. In the fifth chapter we have also had the description of Jesus Christ, the opener, and interpreter of this seven sealed book. Now in this sixth chapter we are to understand of the matter and contents of this book, and of the strange accidents and events which followed upon the opening of every seal.

For in this chapter six of the seals are opened by the Son of God, and the mysteries thereof disclosed unto John, that he might declare them to the church, for the comfort and instruction thereof.

This chapter containeth six principle things, arising from the several openings of the six seals, and they are these, viz.

The spreading of the gospel.

Great persecutions following thereupon.

Famine.

Pestilence.

Complaints of the martyrs.

Fearful revenge upon the world, for shedding the blood of God's saints.

After, I beheld when the Lamb had opened one of the seals, and I heard one

‘ of the four beasts say, as it were the noise
‘ of thunder, come and see,’ Rev. vi. 1.

Now after all these former matters, John did very attentively fix his eyes upon the Lamb, being now about to open the first seal of the book; and all on a sudden he was admonished and stirred up by one of the cherubims, that he should draw near and come up, and take knowledge of these great and important matters, which were now to be revealed unto him. And to the end that he might be thoroughly awakened and stirred up to attention in such weighty matters, it is said, that the voice of the angel which spake unto him, was like the voice of thunder, so that thereby John was thoroughly roused, fitted and prepared, to receive these heavenly visions.

‘ Therefore I beheld, and lo, there was
‘ a white horse, and he that sat on him had
‘ a bow, and a crown was given unto him,
‘ and he went forth conquering, that he
‘ might overcome,’ Rev. vi. 2.

John keeping his eye steady upon the Lamb, having now opened the first seal, doth in a vision see a white horse, &c.

By this white horse, is meant the ministry of the word of God, and the first preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles, and the successors in the primitive church. ‘ The white horse’ is taken

in this sense in the nineteenth chapter of this prophecy, where our Lord Jesus being upon this white horse, beateth down all his enemies before him; for who is able to resist his word, and the ministry of it.

In the first chapter of the propheey of Zechariah, our Lord Jesus purposing to build up his church, being in a very ruinous state after the captivity, is brought in by the prophet on horse-back, both for the re-edifying of his church, and also for the punishment of the Babylonians, the enemies of his people. In the 45th Psalm the church, the spouse, thus saith to her beloved husband Christ, ' Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou mighty one, the sword of thy glory and comely beauty, and with comely beauty ride on prosperously for the busines of truth and of meek righteousness,' Psal. xlv. 3, 4.

Now in all these places of the scripture, we do plainly see, that when Christ goeth about either to preach his gospel, or build up his church, or to be revenged on the enemies thereof, he is brought in on horse-back.

And this doth strongly confirm and warrant this exposition, seeing it is not any imagined sense, or new device of man's brain, but such a sense as other places of scripture will very fully bear out.

Moreover, if we do seriously consider, and deeply weigh the purpose and intention of the Holy Ghost in all this, it will not a little help and farther this exposition. For the chief scope and intention of all is, to describe the state of the church from the apostles time to the end of the world. For this prophecy serveth to ' shew unto John ' the things that must shortly come to ' pass.'

Now, we all know by blessed experience, that the first state of the church did consist in the preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles; and therefore this must be understood of that time and state of the church. For Jesus Christ is he that sitteth upon this white horse, that is, by the ministry of his gospel he conquereth and subdueth the nations under him.

There may be three reasons alledged why this horse is said to be of a white colour.

First, Because the doctrine of the gospel which was preached by Christ and his apostles, was pure and sincere, being without all spots and blots of error and heresy. For the white colour in the scripture doth signify purity, sincerity, innocence, joy, glory, and beauty.

Secondly, Because the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, was full of joy and comfort, as it is said of Samaria, after Philip

had set forth the gospel, that 'there was great joy in that city.'

Thirdly, Because the ministry of Christ and his apostles, was very glorious and beautiful, as it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of them which bring glad tidings of peace,' &c. And again, 'with thy comely beauty ride on prosperously, for the business of truth.'

If any man demand a reason of Christ's sitting on horse-back, and riding forth on horse-back, I answer, that it doth fitly represent that marvellous swiftness wherewith the light of the gospel should be carried and spread, not only throughout all Judea, Samaria, and Gallilee, but also throughout all the kingdoms of the world. For it is not a wonder, to consider how swiftly, and as it were on horse-back, and also how far over the heathen nations, within a few years after Christ's ascension, the doctrine of the gospel was preached, and of multitudes embraced? He rode forth indeed prosperously and swiftly upon this white-horse, even the ministry of the gospel, for the business of truth, and of meek righteousness; and his right hand wrought fearful things, as saith the Psalmist.

Moreover, it is here said, that 'Jesus Christ hath a bow in his hand.' And in the forty-fifth Psalm, from whence it seem-

eth all these phrases and speeches are borrowed, he is said to have 'sharp arrows in his hand,' whereby he pierceth the heart of his enemies.

Now his bow and arrows do signify the piercing power of the gospel, whereby the world hath been subdued unto Christ. For all the arrows of the gospel which Christ shooteth out of his bow, which is even the tongue of his ministers, do stick in the hearts of men, yea they pierce into all the secret places of the soul. For the ministry of the gospel 'is lively, and mighty in operation, sharper than any two-edged sword, and entereth through, even unto the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, of the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts, and the intents of the heart,' Heb. iv. 12.

Here is yet farther mention made of a crown which was given unto Christ, and that 'he went forth conquering that he might overcome.'

This crown signifieth the victory which he getteth over the world with his bow and arrows. For the Psalmist saith: 'By thy sharp arrows in the hearts of the kings enemies, the people shall fall under thee.'

We read in the second of the Acts of the Apostles, that three thousand of the King's enemies were at once shot through

with this bow, and these arrows, and did fall under him. We read of many others, at other times, and in other places. For the apostle saith plainly, that 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, mighty through God to cast down holds, casting down the imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Thus we see how Christ and his apostles and all their true successors, riding upon this white horse, which is the ministry of the gospel, have gone over all the world conquering and overcoming.

I am not ignorant that some do expound this otherwise: but my purpose is not to meddle with other men's opinions and judgments, but to set down that which God hath given to me to see, and which in mine own conscience and persuasion, I suppose to be the truth; refering all to the judgment of the church, and such therein as are indued with the Spirit of God. For, 'the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophets.' And be it known unto all men, that my chief endeavours throughout this whole book, shall be to seek the sense that is, and not the sense that is not: to meddle only with truth, and let falsehood go.

‘ And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see,’ Rev. vi. 3.

As before at the opening of the first seal, so now again at the opening of the second seal, John is called upon by another angel to give attention; and so afterwards at the opening of the third and fourth seal.—Wherein we may observe the heaviness and drowsiness of man’s nature in all heavenly things, which is evermore ready to sink and fall asleep, except it be awaked by many means, and stirred up by special grace.

‘ And there went out another horse that was red, and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword,’ Rev. vi. 4.

This red horse representeth the cruel persecution and bloody wars, which followed the preaching of the gospel. For the red colour in the scripture denoteth blood, cruelty, and wars. The rider upon this horse is the devil himself; for who but he, and his instruments, delight in blood, persecution, and wars? He hath power given him to take peace from the earth (for he could have no power, except it were given him:) and to this purpose a

great sword was given him, to murder and kill with.

And all this is to be understood of the state of the church under the ten great persecutions, raised up against it by the persecuting emperors, Domitian, Trajan, Nero, Antonius, Decius, Dioclesian, Maxentius, Licinius, and other cruel tyrants, even until the time of Constantine the Great. History do report, that these cruel persecutors did in a most savage and horrible manner torture, torment, and shed the blood of innumerable multitudes of God's people. So that as the first state of the church, under the preaching of the gospel, was joyful and peaceable; so this second state of the church, under such outrageous persecutions, was troublesome and tragical, and yet for all that, in the midst of all these swords, blood and flames of persecution, the church did still prevail and increase.— For the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the gospel. And the church oftentimes being sown in blood, yet springeth up, and groweth in blood. And as for the cruel and blood-sucking emperors, which could not endure the light of the gospel, but strove by tyranny to suppress it; the just God which taketh vengeance of all iniquity, and especially of those that persecute his children, will not suffer them to e-

scape his righteous judgment; for he gave them over, some to be slain in the wars; some to be tortured with horrible diseases; some to be poisoned; some to be murdered; and some to murder themselves. Thus did God the avenger shew himself from heaven, as history reports, and pay home to the full these persecutors of his church, making them examples of his wrath, and spectacles of his vengeance to all nations.

‘ And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. Then I beheld, and lo a black horse, and he that sat on him, had balances in his hand,’ &c.

By the black horse, famine and death is signified; for the black colour is a mournful sad colour, and what maketh men more pensive and sad than famine, and extreme hunger? for it is a thing intolerable; and therefore the Holy Ghost saith, ‘ they be better that are killed with the sword, than they that die of famine,’ Lam. iv. 9. He that sitteth on this horse, hath a balance in his hand, which signifieth great penury and scarcity of all things, but especially of victuals, insomuch, that men must be put on allowance, and their bread and drink must be delivered out by weight and measure, as is often the case with cities that are long besieged. This is the punishment

which God threateneth in Leviticus xxvi. 6. and Ezekiel iv. 5. ' That he would break the staff of bread, and that ten women should bake in one oven, and deliver bread by measure.'

Now to declare the grievousness of this famine, a voice cometh from the throne and from the angels, that a ' measure of wheat should be for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny:' the measure here spoken of is a chenix, which some writers say, was as much as would serve a man for bread-corn for one day: And the Roman penny under Domitian, was always seven pence of our money. And at that time the labouring man did work for a penny a-day, which would do little more than buy him bread-corn. How then should his wife and children do? whereas it is said, ' wine and oil hurt thou not,' I take that it should rather be translated, ' In wine and oil thou shalt not do unjustly:' as the word will bear it. And the sense is, that in the state of corn and victual, they shall deal conscientiously and mercifully, not selling at the highest, but rather at the lowest rate now in the times of extreme scarcity.

Now all this is to be understood of that most grievous famine which we read to have been about the year of our Lord 316,

and sundry times afterward. And all this for the contempt of the gospel preached by Christ and his apostles upon the white-horse, and the murdering of God's saints, by him upon the red-horse, and his instruments. So grievous and fearful a thing is the contempt of the gospel, and the persecuting of the saints. And God did most justly cause the world to smart for it, and make them with sorrow enough to feel the punishment of the gospel rejected.

' And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see,' Rev. vi. 7.

' And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed after him,' &c. ver. 8.

This pale horse signifieth the pestilence and other contagious diseases, which God most justly brought upon the world for the contempt of the gospel, and the murdering of Christ and his apostles. And as I noted before out of the scriptures, that when God cometh either in mercy or judgment, he is said to come on horse-back, to note his expedition and swiftness, both in the one and the other; so, as before, Christ is upon the white-horse, the devil upon the red-horse, famine upon the black horse: so here 'death and hell' are said to be upon the 'pale horse;' for pestilence and death mak-

eth men look pale; but being dead, he faith hell followed. For assuredly hell doth always follow the death of the body, excepting those only whom Christ hath delivered from hell and damnation by the power of his death.

Thus then it is; the red horse with blood, the black horse with famine, the pale horse with pestilence, have power given over the fourth part of the men to murder, kill, and slay; as all history do shew, that for the rejecting of Christ and his gospel, these plagues were carried as it were on horseback, over a great part of the world. Now as touching this famine and pestilence which fell out upon the opening of the third and fourth seals, they are to be referred unto those times especially, wherein the Huns, Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations which were the wasters of the world, did waste and destroy the Roman empire both far and near. Whereupon grew this famine, scarcity, and pestilence, and strange diseases here spoken of, which happened about three hundred years after Christ.

‘ And when he had opened the fifth seal,
‘ I saw under the altar, the souls of them
‘ that were killed for the word of God,
‘ and for the testimony which they main-
‘ tained,’ Rev. vi. 9.

Here is discovered the state of the martyrs after this life, and the condition of the spirits of all just and perfect men. For whereas it might be demanded, what became of all those heaps and multitudes of men which were slain for the testimony of Jesus in the ten persecutions, it is here answered, that they were under the altar.— ‘John in a vision feeth them under the altar.’ That is, under the merciful protection of Christ in heaven, who for them and for us all, was made both altar, priest, and sacrifice. This altar Christ, is afterwards called ‘the golden altar, which is ‘before the throne of God,’ Rev. viii. 3. So then it is clear, that the souls of the martyrs were with Christ in glory. For he saith to his disciples, ‘where I am, there ‘shall you be also,’ John xiv. 3. And in another place he saith, ‘If I were lifted up ‘from the earth, I should draw all men unto me,’ John xii. 32, that is all believers. Then it followeth, that the souls of these just and righteous men were in paradise, and in Abraham’s bosom, which is the very port and haven of salvation. For although the persecuting emperors, and other tyrants of the earth, had power to kill their bodies, yet they had no power over their souls, as our Lord Jesus affirmeth.

‘ And they cried with a loud voice,
* saying, how long, Lord, holy and true,
* dost not thou judge and avenge our blood
* on them that dwell upon the earth?’

Rev. vi. 10.

Here we see plainly, that the souls of the martyrs do very vehemently cry for vengeance upon these cruel tyrants which shed their blood. Moreover, they cry for it speedily, and seem to be impatient of delay. But it is to be observed, that they do not this in any hatred, or private desire of revenge, in respect of any wrong or cruelty shewed to them; but in very love and burning zeal of the kingdom and glory of Christ, and whatsoever desire they have, it is wholly to that end. Wherefore they are here under a figure brought in crying for vengeance, rather to express what judgment of God tarrieth for the cruel persecuters, then to shew what mind they bear towards them. For it is indeed their cause that crieth for vengeance. And as Abel’s blood, so their blood crieth aloud in the ears of the Lord of hosts for revenge.

Moreover, we may not imagine or gather out of this loud crying of the martyrs in heaven, that they have any disturbance, impatience, disquietnes, or any discontentment there. But this they do in a fervent desire of that fulness of glory, which they

assuredly hope for and look for in consummation of all things, when both their souls and bodies shall be joined together.

‘ And long white robes were given unto every one; and it was said unto them, ‘ That they should rest for a little season, ‘ until their fellow servants and their brethren which should be killed, even as ‘ they were, were fulfilled.’ Rev. vi. 11.

These white robes do signify that honour, glory, and dignity, whereunto not only the martyrs, but also of all other faithful believers are advanced in the chambers of peace: for so white robes are to be understood in sundry other places of this book. And this doth plainly prove, that the martyrs were now in glory with Christ.

Now, as concerning the answer to their complaint and cry, it was this, that they should be content, and have patience for a little season, (for the time remaining, to the end of the world, was but as a day with God, and as a moment in comparison of eternity:) and the reason of the delay is yielded, which is this, that there were numbers of others, their brethren in the world, which should be martyred and slain for the truth, as well as they, under the great antichrist of Rome, and the bloody Turk, at and upon the opening of the seventh seal. And therefore in considera-

tion that the most wise God had decreed and fore-determined with himself in most secret and hid counfel, to bring multitudes of others to glory by the same way and means that they themselves were brought, that therefore in the mean time, being so short a time, they should rest satisfied and contented. And here by the way, we see what stayeth the coming of Christ unto judgment; namely this, that the number of the martyrs and faints and all such as he hath chosen unto life, are not yet accomplished.

‘ And behold when he opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earth-quake, and the sun was as black as sack-cloth of hair, and the moon was like blood.’

Rev. vi. 12.

‘ And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig-tree casteth her green figs, when it is shaken of a mighty wind.’

Rev. vi. 13.

‘ And heaven departed away as a scroll when it is rolled, and every mountain and isle were moved out of their place.’

Rev. vi. 14.

Upon the opening of the sixth seal, very doleful and fearful things do follow: as earth-quakes, the darkning of the sun, the obscurity of the moon, the falling of the stars, the rolling together of the heavens,

the removing of mountains and isles out of their places, the howlings and horrors of kings, captains, and other potentates of the earth, which are all things very terrible and fearful to behold: and all these do represent and figure out unto us the most fearful tokens of God's high displeasure and most heavy indignation against the wicked world. Very grievous things fell out upon the opening of the second, third, and fourth seals: but they are far more grievous which follow upon the opening of this sixth seal: for this sixth seal containeth an aggravation and increase of all the former judgments. For now after the cry of the martyrs for vengeance, God the avenger of the blood of the righteous doth shew himself from heaven, and declare his wrath in a more fearful manner than before, even to the great astonishment of all the creatures in heaven and earth. So horrible a thing is the shedding of the blood of the Christians. For now we see plainly, that God heareth the cries of his martyrs, and cometh as a giant, or an armed man, to take vengeance of all their enemies, for, 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints:' Psal. cxvi. 15. and he is much moved with the cry of their blood; as here we see. And therefore now threatened to hold a general assize, wherein he will make inquisition

after blood, and arraign and condemn all such as are found guilty thereof: according as the persecuting emperors and many others did find and feel by woful experience. For, if God be angry but a little, who may endure it.

Now although the stories do report, that in those days, which was above three hundred years after Christ, there were many great and fearful earth-quakes in divers nations and cities of the world: yet it is apparent, that the earth-quake here spoken of, cannot be taken literally, nor any of the rest here mentioned. For there was never any time, neither is it mentioned in any chronicle, that ever the sun was as black as sack-cloth of hair; or the moon turned into blood; or the stars fell from heaven; or the heavens rolled together like a scroll; or that mountains and islands were moved out of their places. Therefore of necessity all this must be understood metaphorically; that is, that God did in so strange and fearful a manner manifest his wrath from heaven by tumults, commotions, seditions, and alterations of kingdoms, as if these things of the sun, moon, and stars, had been visibly represented to the eye. An earth-quake in this book, and other books also of the scriptures, doth by a borrowed speech signify commotions of com-

mon-wealths, troubles, tumults, uproars, and great alterations of states and kingdoms. The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, and rolling together of the heavens, do by a metaphor in the scripture, signify the wrath of God; which they being not able to endure, are said here to blush at, to cover themselves, to hide themselves, to be ashamed of themselves, to remove out of their places, no more to do their office, &c. For as birds do hide themselves, and thrust their heads into bushes, when the eagle cometh abroad: And as all beasts of the forest do tremble and couch in their dens, when the lion roareth: and as the subject doth hide himself, and dare not shew his head, with whom the King is displeased; So here it is said, that the whole earth doth tremble, and all the celestial creatures are amazed and confounded with beholding the angry face of God against the world, *in* so much that they do as it were draw a canopy over them, hide themselves under a cloud, and surcease to do their offices.

The darkning of the sun and moon, is taken in this sense in the second of Joel, and also in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. For there God promising and foretelling, that in the last days he would abundantly power forth of his Spirit upon all flesh (which is to be understood

of the plentiful preaching of the gospel in the apostles time, and the abundance of grace that was given with the same) addeth, that for the contempt of so great grace and mercy, he would shew wonders in heaven above, and tokens in the earth beneath: blood and fire, and the vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. The meaning of the prophet is, as Peter also doth expound it, that God from heaven will shew such apparent signs of his wrath against the world, that men should be no less amazed, than if the whole order of nature were inverted. And this was performed, when as the Jews for the contempt of Christ and his gospel, were most miserably destroyed by the Romans.

Even so here, under the opening of the sixth seal God doth threaten, that for the murdering of his son Christ, and his apostles, and innumerable Christians, he would bring strange judgments and extraordinary calamities upon the world, according as all history do shew, that those times were full of bloodshed, commotions, famine, pestilence, and miseries of all sorts. I am not ignorant, that the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars from heaven, are sometimes in this book put for the

obscurity and corruption of pure doctrine, and the falling away of the pastors of the church from their sincerity and zeal. But in this place the circumstances will not bear that sense:

First, Because here the darkening of the sun and moon, &c. is joined with an earthquake; the rolling together of the heavens, and the moving of mountains and islands out of their places, which argueth a most horrible confusion of all things.

Secondly, Because afterward in the eighth chapter, he doth of purpose speak of the corrupting of pure doctrine, and the falling away of the ministers, referring it to that chapter, as his proper place.

Thirdly, Because the kings and captaines of the earth here immediately mentioned, would never have been cast into any such perplexities and horrors upon any corruption of doctrine and ministry, as we here read of. For commonly men are not any whit touched or moved with that, or such like things..

Lastly, Because the scope and intention of the Holy Ghost, under the opening of this sixth seal, is to describe corporal, not spiritual; visible, not invisible judgments; for he doth orderly and of purpose handle them in the next chapter.

Now, whereas it is said in the last three

verses, that ' the kings of the earth, and ' the chief captains, and the mighty men, ' and every bond-man, and every free-man ' hid themselves in dens, and amongst the ' rocks of the mountains, and said to the ' rocks and mountains, fall on us,' Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17, the sense and meaning of all is this, that these visible judgments should be so horrible and extraordinary, that all sorts of men then living upon the face of the earth, should even wish themselves buried quick, or that they might run into a mouse-hole, to hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb. For being both outwardly terrified with the sensible judgments, and inwardly gripped and tormented with the fury of their own consciences, they are at no hand able to endure it.

C H A P. VII.

THIS Chapter doth wholly appertain unto the opening of the sixth seal.— It sheweth generally, how God in the midst of all the troubles which happened under the opening of the sixth seal, yet did preserve his own church, and mercifully provide for his own people.

This seventh chapter may very fitly be divided into three parts.

First, It sheweth, that as God did most fearfully punish the world with visible and sensible judgments, as we have heard before: So now he would set upon them with invisible and spiritual plagues, which are of all others most grievous and intolerable.

Secondly, It sheweth the state and condition of the church militant here on earth, as before was shewed under the opening of the fifth seal, the state of the church triumphant in the heavens, namely, that it is sealed and set in safety from all dangers.

Thirdly, It sheweth the blessed and happy state of all God's elect, and their fervent praises and zealous worship of God, who thus mercifully did provide for their security in the midst of greatest perils and extremities.

‘ And after that, I saw four angels stand on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, neither on the sea, neither on any green tree,’
Rev. vii. 1.

These four angels are angels of darkness, or four devils, which is proved by this reason, that they hold the four winds from blowing on the earth, that is, stop the

course of the gospel, which is a spiritual plague.

They are said to stand upon the four corners of the earth, because power was given them to plague, not some one or two countries, but the universal world, both East, West, North and South.

The blowing of the winds doth very fitly represent the preaching of the gospel, and that heavenly inspiration and breathing of the Holy Ghost which goeth with it. Wind is so taken, John iii. 4. where our Lord Jesus saith, 'the wind bloweth where it listeth, &c. So is every man that is born of the Spirit.' And again in the fourth chapter of the Song of Solomon in these words; 'arise, O north, and come, O south, ' and blow on my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.' Where it plainly appeareth, that the church craveth the inspiration of the Spirit, that her fruits may abound; for what can be meant by these winds which she wisheth to blow upon her garden, but the breathings of God's Spirit and word? It followeth then, that if the blowing of the winds in the scriptures do signify the breathing of God's grace, and Holy Spirit, that the stopping of the winds by reason of the contraries, doth here signify the stopping the same, and the deprivation of all heavenly blessings. So that it

is clear, that a spiritual plague is here represented, which also is the more apparent because here is such a special *proviso* and care had for the church's safety, that it might not be infected with this spiritual contagion. Now all this doth plainly fore-prophefy, not only the stopping of the course of the gospel, but even the utter taking of it away from the world, for their great contempt thereof and the horrible murdering and massacring of all the true professors of it; according as it came to pass afterward in the prevailing first of heresies, and afterward of the Popish and Mahometan religion, as in the two next chapters following shall plainly appear.

‘ And I saw another angel come up from the east, which had the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom power was given to hurt the earth and sea, saying, Hurt ye not the earth, neither the sea, neither the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads,’ Rev. vii. 2, 3.

This angel is Jesus Christ, who by the prophet is called ‘ the Angel of the covenant.’ That angels do represent and sustain the person of Christ their head, is so common and usual a thing in the scriptures, that I shall not say more on it.

That this angel is Christ, it doth plainly appear by the things here attributed unto him, which can agree to no other.

First; In that he hath the seal of the living God (which is the Spirit of adoption) to set upon all the elect, for he is the only keeper of this great seal, and this privy seal. He only hath authority to set it upon whom he will.

Secondly, Because he is said ‘to come up from the east:’ that he is the only Sun of Righteousnes which ariseth upon his church every morning, and with his bright beams expelleth all darkness from it; according to that of Zacharias in his prophetical song, ‘through the tender mercy of ‘our God, the day spring from on high ‘visited us,’ Luke i. 78.

Thirdly, Because he holdeth a sovereignty and command over the devils: for he chargeth them here to stay their hands from doing any hurt, till he had provided for his elect.

Whereas it is said, ‘that power was given to these devils to hurt the earth; the sea and trees,’ Rev. vii. 2. that is, the number of reprobates, we may note, that the devils have no absolute power, but only by permission, as appeareth in this, that they could neither touch Job, nor enter into the herd of swine without license.

Whereas it is said, ' till we have sealed the servants of our God in their fore-heads,' it doth plainly show that the punishment of the wicked are deferred till provision be made for the elect. The flood came not upon the old world, till Noah and his family were received into the ark. The angels destroyed not Sodom, till Lot was in safety. The plaguing angel spared the first-born of Egypt, till the posts of the Israelites houses were sprinkled with the blood of the pascal lamb. The six angels sent to destroy Jerusalem, are charged to stay the execution, till the servants of God were marked in their fore-heads, *Ezek. ix. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

All these examples do manifestly declare what tender care the Lord in all ages hath had of his own people, that they might be delivered and set in safety in the midst of all extremities. Even so here we see that God is very careful that his own children might not be infected with those damnable heresies which now already, upon the stopping of the course of the gospel, began to be hatched, and afterwards did spring and grow up in the church, both thick and three-fold.

' And I heard the number of them that were sealed, an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the chil-

‘ dren of Israel; of the tribe of Judah, were sealed twelve thousand,’ &c. Rev. vii. 4.

Now John heareth the number of them that were sealed, and he reckoneth up the whole church militant, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, he saith, ‘ that of the church of the Jews there were sealed an hundred and forty-four thousand.’ Here he putteth a certain number for an uncertain, and a definite number also for an indefinite; for his meaning is not that there were so many, and neither more nor less sealed; but this number doth arise of 12 times 12, in that he saith, ‘ of every tribe twelve thousand;’ for twelve times twelve thousand, make an hundred forty and four thousand. Neither yet may we think, that of every tribe there were an equal number sealed, not more nor less of one tribe than another, but this number of twelve, is used as the perfect and full number; in as much as the church of the Jews was founded upon the twelve patriarchs, unto which our Saviour had respect, when for to gather the dispersed and lost sheep of the house of Israel he chose twelve apostles.

Now here we are to observe, that notwithstanding the horrible persecutions and calamities which fell out upon the opening of four of the seals, yet God had his church even of the Jews, which in the judgment

of reason, a man would have thought long ere now, had been utterly extinct and abolished. But the apostle faith, ‘ God hath not cast off his people which he had chosen,’ Rom. xi. 2. that is utterly cast them off.

It is therefore a most sure and certain position in divinity, that God hath always his; that is, in all ages, in all times, in all places, in all countries, even in the midst of all troubles and flames of persecution, yet God hath his hid and invisible church even upon the face of the earth. As it was in the days of Elias, and in Christ’s time, when ‘ the Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep scattered.’ And as it was in the days of the great Antichrist, as afterward we shall see.

Moreover, it is to be observed, that in the enumeration of the twelve tribes, the tribe of Dan is left out, and the tribe of Levi taken in. The cause of the omission of the tribe of Dan, was their continuance in idolatry from the time of the Judges (at what time they first fell into it) even unto the captivity. This tribe is also omitted in the catalogue of the tribes mentioned in Chron. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. vii. Then the reason of this omission, is first their unworthiness; and secondly, that there might be room for the tribe of Levi to be taken in; which in this catalogue for singular

reason, and a special mystery might not be omitted. For, although the tribe of Levi had no portion or inheritance amongst the other tribes in the earthly Canaan; and now the priesthood being transferred unto Christ, the Holy Ghost doth expressly affirm, that the tribe of Levi, as well as others, hath his part and portion in the heavenly inheritance, and the celestial Canaan.

‘After these things, I beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with long white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation cometh of God,’ &c. Rev. vii. 9, 10.

This is to be understood of the church of the Gentiles, and they are said to be ‘an innumerable multitude of all countries and nations.’ For although the church of God in respect of the reprobates is very small, and as an handful upon the face of the earth; yet in itself simply considered, it is very great and large: for even out of Adam’s cursed race, God hath chosen many thousands to life. And here still we are to observe the great goodness and mercy of God, that notwithstanding former persecutions, and the great blindness which

afterward did invade the church in the prevailing errors and heresies: yef John heareth and seeth such an huge number sealed up to salvation, through Christ, both of the Jews and the Gentiles.

The church of the Gentiles exceeding in number the church of the Jews, are here said 'to have long white robes,' in token of their purity and innocency; 'and palms 'in their hands,' in sign of their victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.—palms in ancient times were ensigns and badges of victory.

After this, is set down how the whole church of the Gentiles do praise and worship God freely, acknowledging salvation to be only of him through Christ. And all the angels of heaven do applaud, subscribe, and say Amen to the same, Rev. vii. 10, 11, 12. as we have heard before in the fourth chapter.

The four beasts are here mentioned again, whereby is meant the angels, both because they are said to have wings, chapter iv. which agreeth to none but angels, Isaiah vi. and also because they are expressly named and interpreted to be the cherubims, Ezek. x.

If any man wonder why the angels

should be called beasts, let him be resolved with these four reasons.

First, Because they are compared to beasts before, as the lion, calf, &c.

Secondly, Because Ezekiel called them so, in as much as they draw God's chariot of triumph.

Thirdly, Because the prophet Zechariah compareth them to red, speckled, and white horses.

Fourthly, Because the same prophet calleth them God's coach-horses, and the multitudes and societies of them, he calleth God's chariots, which came out of two mountains of brass, that is, they went forth at his decree (which standeth as fast, and unremoveable, as a mountain of brass) to comfort and deliver his church out of the captivity of Babylon, and also to succour and help the remnant which were left behind in Judea. Now in the prophets, these chariots and chariot-horses are said to carry the Almighty most swiftly throughout all the world. And therefore in Zechariah it is said of the angels, ' these are they which go through the whole world,' Zech. i. 10. In Ezekiel it is said, ' that the beasts ran, and returned like lightning.' And again, ' that they sparkled like the appearance of bright brass, and the wheels of God's chariots were moved

' with inconceivable swiftness, even as fast as the angels did fly,' Ezek. i. 14. Let these reasons and scriptures then satisfy us touching this, that the angels are called beasts. After all this, one of the twenty-four elders asketh John what they were, and from whence they came, which were thus arrayed in long white robes. Which question is asked of the elder, not as being ignorant thereof; but to stir up John, being ignorant, to inquire of the matter, that he might instruct him therein. And therefore when John confessed his ignorance, desiring to be instructed therein, the elder telleth him the whole matter; namely, 'that they were such as were come out of great tribulation. For none can enter into life, but through many afflictions,' as the apostle saith. After this again, the militant and visible church is described and set forth, not according to their present state, but according to that which is to come; for they are here spoken of, as if they were already in possession of heaven; and that for the infallible certainty and assurance thereof. Therefore the apostle saith, that 'even already do they sit together in heavenly places.' And here they are said 'to be in the presence of the throne of God, &c. to hunger and thirst no more, &c. to have all tears wiped from

‘their eyes, and to be led by the Lamb unto the fountain of living waters,’ Rev. vii. 16, 17. All which doth very plainly and plentifully express that infinite glory and endless felicity which is prepared for all the true and faithful worshippers of God.—Many good lessons and observations might be gathered out of all this: But I do of purpose omit them, in this work I do chiefly and almost altogether aim at the interpretation, therein also studying brevity, soundness, and plainness.

C H A P. VIII.

WE have heard out of the seventh chapter, how the devils and their instruments, the Roman emperors, did stop the course of the gospel. Now in this chapter we are to hear the woful effects of the stopping thereof, which was the springing up, and prevailing of manifold errors and heresies in the world. So that the principle design is to shew, that God for the contempt of his gospel, and great indignities offered to the true professors thereof, did give up the world to blindness, to error, to superstition and heresy: and as the apostle faith, ‘because they received

‘not the love of the truth, therefore God sent them strong delusions, that they should believe in lies,’ 2 Thes. ii. 11. For as before we have heard how the world was most fearfully punished with external plagues and judgments, so here we are to understand how the same was punished with judgments spiritual and temporal, as formerly was mentioned upon the stopping of the four winds. For although that spiritual plague was very great, yet these spiritual plagues which follow upon the opening of the seventh seal, are far greater. For now we are to hear and understand, not only of the errors and heresies, whereby a way and passage was made by degrees, as it were by certain steps, for Antichrist to climb up into his cursed chair; and to take possession thereof; but also we are to understand of his very tyranny and kingdom itself; and also of the kingdom of the Turk, and the last judgment. For the things contained under the opening of the seventh seal, do reach unto the end of the world. For the book sealed with seven seals, containeth all the whole matters which were to be revealed.

This chapter containeth four principle things, as it were the four parts thereof.

First, The great attention and silence, with admiration which was in the church

at and upon the coming forth of this most horrible vengeance.

Secondly, Before the execution of these most execrable plagues, the church is remembered and set in safety with all her children, by her great mediator Christ Jesus.

Thirdly, The execution of this vengeance which cometh forth at the blowing of the seven trumpets by seven angels.

Fourthly, The vengeance itself contained in the prevailing of error and heresy; the falling away of the pastors of the church, and the universal darkness that followed thereupon.

‘And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven above half an hour,’ Rev. viii. 1.

By heaven in this place he meaneth not the kingdom of glory after this life; but by heaven is meant the church here upon earth, as it is so taken, Rev. xii. 1.—xiv. 2. There may be three reasons assigned why the church is called heaven.

First, Because the birth thereof is from heaven; for ‘it is born of God,’ 1 John v. 1.

Secondly, Because the inheritance thereof is from heaven, and therefore is called, ‘the inheritance of the saints,’ Col. i. 12.

Thirdly, Because 'the conversation thereof is in heaven,' Phil. iii. 20.

To this may be added, that our Lord Jesus in his gospel doth so often call his visible church 'the kingdom of heaven,' by a trope, because Christ beginneth his reign in the faithful therein, whom afterward he translateth actually into the very kingdom of glory. By silence here is meant the great attention of the church, because great things were now at hand. For now upon the opening of the seventh seal, far greater matters are threatened than any before: and therefore the church doth listen unto them in deep silence, and as it were in horror and trembling through admiration; for now there appear such dreadful judgments of God, to be executed upon the earth, that all the heavenly company are astonished and amazed to behold it, and do as it were quake and tremble to think upon it. For as when heavy news cometh down from the Prince to be proclaimed in open markets, all good subiects do listen and give ear with silence and trembling; so it fareth in this case. By half an hour, he meaneth that short time, wherein the minds of the godly were prepared, fitted and disposed, wisely to consider of these matters, and to make good use of them. I know right well, that this verse is far other-

wise interpreted by some: but I take this to be most sound, and simple, and best agreeing to all that followeth: for the next verse is joined unto this by a conjunction copulative, to note a coherence of the matter, and to draw the sense together: for he saith, ‘ And I saw seven angels, which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets,’ Rev. viii. 2.

These seven trumpets signify that God would proceed against the world in fearful hostility, and come against it as an open enemy unto battle, proclaiming open war against it, as it were with sound of trumpet and drum, setting up the flag of defiance against it. And hereupon groweth this silence and trembling in the church, which only moved with the signs of God’s wrath, when as all others sit still in security, as the prophet Zechariah faid in a like case.

To stand in this place, signifieth to administer, as it is said of the priests and Levites, that they stand before God, and before the altar, that is minister. So here the angels do stand before God, as ready to administer and execute these judgments. For they are ministering spirits, and here they do sound the alarm at the commandment of God. These angels are propounded as seven in number, because it pleased

God at once to power down his wrath upon the rebellious world, but at divers times, and by peace-meal. Whether these were good or bad angels: it is not material to dispute, seeing God executeth his judgments, both by the one and the other.

Moreover, it is specially to be observed, that the blowing of these seven trumpets, do all belong to the opening of the seventh seal, are as it were the seven parts thereof; for the things which fall out upon the blowing of these seven trumpets, do reach even unto the last judgment, as the angel swearth, Rev. x. 6, 7.

Then another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer, and much odours was given unto him, that he should offer with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altars, which is before the throne, Rev. viii. 3.

We heard before, that when the course of the gospel was stopt by the devil and his instruments, yet God was very careful for the safety and sealing up of his own servants; so likewise we are now to hear of the like care and providence; for now, that errors and heresies were to be sown in the world whereby many were corrupted; and that he himself from heaven doth proclaim open enmity against the despisers of his gospel, by giving them up to blindness and

error; he doth double his care and providence to all his faithful worshippers. For here we do plainly see, that the church hath a mediator, and that he which keepeth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.— And therefore when the wrath of God doth most of all break forth upon the world for the contempt of his graces, yet the church is remembered, and set in safety with all her children. For her prayers come up before God, and are accepted through the Mediator. And this is the sense and meaning of this third verse.

By this angel is meant Jesus Christ, the angel of the covenant, as we have heard before, who is not an angel by nature, but by office.

It is manifest that in the old law there was a golden altar, and a golden censer, on which the priest did burn sweet incense before the Lord; which did figure the mediation of Christ, in whom the prayers of the saints are accepted.

Now here the Holy Ghost alludeth to that sacrificing priest-hood of the Old Testament, where incense was offered at the altar, which now is the sweet savour of the death of Christ, through whom both we and all our sacrifices are seasoned and sweetened.

Who therefore is this angel but Christ?

What are the sweet odours with which the prayers of all saints come before God, but the most sweet mediation of the Lord Jefus? What is meant by the smoak of the odours which with the prayers of the saints went up before God out of the angels hand?— Surely the sweet incense of Christ's mediation, wherewith our prayers are spiced and perfumed, that they might be as sweet smelling sacrifices in the nostrils of God, For as water cast into a fire, raiseth a smoak; so the tears of the faithful be-sprinkled in their prayers, make them as sweet incense, acceptable to God through Christ. The sum of all is this, that in the midst of all these heresies, and hellish troubles which should be raised up by the Pope and his clergy, the Turk and his armies, as in the next chapter we shall see, the elect have their prayers heard for their preservation by the merits of Christ.

‘ And the angel took the censer, and filled with it the fire of the altar; and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and trumpets, thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquakes,’ Rev. viii. 5.

Here we see how Jesus Christ taketh the censer, and filleth it with the fire of the altar; that is, the graces and gifts of the Spirit; for so the fire of the altar is taken in Isaiah.

In this sense it is said, that our Lord Jesus should baptize with the fire of the Holy Ghost, that is, the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. In this sense also the Holy Ghost did rest upon the disciples, in the likeness of cloven tongues like fire whereupon they are filled with gifts and graces.

The Holy Ghost is compared to fire, because he burneth out our dross, purgeth the hearts of the faithful, and setteth them on fire with the burning love and zeal of God's glory. So then it followeth, that as before there was provision had for the safety of the church by her Mediator, so here many heavenly gifts and graces are bestowed upon her. For Christ casteth this fire of the altar upon the earth, that is, upon his dwelling in the earth.

Hereupon it is said, that there were voices and thunderings, &c. that is, all manner of broils, tumults, uproars, slaughters, and divisions. For after the gospel was sounded forth in the church by the power of the Holy Ghost, the devil is disturbed, and the world molested. And hence spring all these broils and tumults, thundering and lightning; and we must look for such things after the preaching of the gospel, whilst there is a world and a devil.

Therefore our Lord Jesus saith, ‘ he came not to bring peace into the earth, but fire and sword, and to set a man at variance against his father, and likewise the daughter against her mother,’ &c. Matth. x. 34. For divisions and civil dissensions do always follow the preaching of the gospel; which thing is not yet simply in the nature of the gospel of peace, but accidentally through the frowardness and corruption of man’s nature, which will not yield unto it, but most stubbornly rebelleth against it.

‘ Then these seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to blow,’ Rev. viii. 6.

Now beginneth this open war to be proclaimed against the world, for their great ungodliness and rebellion against the truth.

‘ So the first angel blew the trumpet, and there was hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast into the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt, and all green grass was burnt,’ Rev. viii. 7.

It were absurd to imagine that any thing in this verse is to be taken literally; seeing in the literal sense there was never any such matter. Therefore, of necessity it must be expounded mystically, and allegorically.—Therefore, by this hail and fire mingled with blood, is meant errors and heresies.

For, as hail doth beat down corn, and destroy the fruits of the earth; fire doth consume, and blood doth corrupt and putrify; so false doctrine and heresy doth annoy, consume and corrupt the souls of men. For, it is said, that 'all these things mingled together, were cast upon the earth:' that is, the inhabitants of the earth, and the third part of the trees, that is, the numbers of men or a very great part of the world was corrupted. For trees, in scripture signify men; and 'all green grass was burnt,' that is, the fresh fruits of grace did wither apace and dry up; for as error and heresy did prevail, so truth and godliness did decay. All this hath relation to the heresies of Sabellius, Manicheus, Marcion, Fotinus, Paulus, Samosatenus, Nestorius, Novatus, Diodorus, Apolinaris, Pelagius, and many others, which about this time, being four hundred years after Christ, began to spring up and grow apace.

' And the second angel blew the trumpet, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood.'

Upon the blowing of the second trumpet by the second angel, here appeareth a great mountain burning with fire, whereby is meant some great and notable heresies,

as that of Arius, which troubled and wasted the church for the space of three hundred years, being greatly favoured of sundry emperors and other great potentates in the earth, by means whereof, it continued and overspread so long. Also this may be referred to other great and notable arch-heresies, as that of Donatus, Macedonius, Eutyches, Valentius, and such like: which all are here compared to a mountain for their hugeness and greatness, and to a burning mountain, because the church was almost burnt up thereby. For this world mountain, is sometimes in the scripture put for any let or hindrance to true religion, as is error and heresy, Zech. iv. 7. Luke iii. 5.

Therefore it is said, that it ‘was cast into the sea,’ that is, these great heresies are cast upon the world in God’s wrath and heavy indignation; for the sea is put for the world; Rev. iv. 6.—xiii. 1.—xii. 6. for as the sea is full of rocks, sands, sirts, waves, storms, and tempests: so it fareth with this present evil world.

Moreover it is said, ‘the third part of the sea became blood,’ that is, all Europe, or some great part of the world was corrupted, and infected with these great heresies. And he faith in the next verse, that ‘the third part of the ships were destroyed,’ that is,

a great number of mariners and ship-masters, as well as land-men were infected with these heresies, and died of them.

‘ Then the third angel blew the trumpet, ‘ and there fell a great star from heaven, ‘ burning like a torch, and it fell into the ‘ third part of the rivers, and into the foun- ‘ tains of waters,’ Rev. viii. 10.

Stars in this book are put for the ministers of the gospel, as we have heard out of the first chapter, and the reasons why. Then followeth, that the falling of this star from heaven, doth most fitly signify and set forth the declining and fall of the pastors of the church, and their corrupting of the true doctrine, which is meant by the fresh rivers, and pure fountains into which it fell. This star hath his name of the elect, for it is called wormwood; because through the fall of it, the sweet waters into which it fell, were turned into bitterness, and men died of them, that is the doctrine was corrupted, which turned to the destruction of many.

‘ And the fourth angel blew the trumpet, ‘ and the third part of the sun was smitten, ‘ and the third part of the moon, and the ‘ third part of the stars, so that the third ‘ part of them was darkened,’ Rev. viii. 12.

This darkning of the sun, moon, and stars, doth signify that great darkness which

was brought upon the church by such teachers as did daily more and more degenerate.

Three things are generally to be observed in the blowing of these first four trumpets:

First, That the plagues here mentioned, are specially to be understood of spiritual plagues.

Secondly, That there is a progression from lesser to greater in these plagues.

Thirdly, That in every one there is mentioned but a third part destroyed, which plainly sheweth, that although the church was greatly annoyed and pestered with these errors and heresies, yet it was not destroyed and brought to utter desolation; for the full setting up of Antichrist was not yet come. All these errors and heresies which were cast upon the world, and did spring and grow apace in all places, did, as it were, make way for Antichrist, and (as it were by stirrups) hoist and help him up into his cursed chair.

By the stories of the church, and course of times, it seemeth that the Holy Ghost pointeth at those manifold heresies which sprung up in the church after the first three hundred years, especially after the death of Constantine the Great, who procured

peace to the church, destroyed idolatry, and set up true religion in his days.

Now after his reign, and the reign of Theodosius that good emperor, Constantinus, Julianus, Arcadius, Honorius, and many other wicked emperors succeeded; by whose means all things in the church grew worse and worse; yet this one thing is to be observed, that all true religion was not utterly extinct and put out, till the full loosing of Satan, which was a thousand years after Christ; as we shall plainly see when we come to the twentieth chapter, concerning the binding of Satan for a thousand years. For sure it is, that the main principles and grounds of religion, continued in the church till this full loosing of Satan; which was about the time of Silvester the second, that monster, as afterward we shall hear.

But now in the mean time, we see what heresies sprung up, what corruption grew and increased more and more, what darkness began to overspread a third part of the world; and these things grew worse and worse, even till by these means the great Antichrist came to be possessed of his cursed seat and see of Rome, which was about six-hundred years after Christ.

And I beheld, and heard one angel flying in the midst of heaven, saying with a

‘loud voice: Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the sounds to come of the three angels which were yet to blow the trumpets,’ Rev. viii. 13.

Because the judgments which were to be executed hereafter, upon the blowing of the next three trumpets, were far more dreadful and horrible than any were before; therefore here is a special angel or messenger of God, sent of purpose to give warning thereof, and to proclaim openly in the church three fearful woes, which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, that is, all earthly-minded men, as worldlings, Papists, and Atheists, at such time as the next three angels should blow the trumpets.

The first, of these great woes, is to be understood of the Papacy. The second, of Turkism. The third, of the last judgment. As if he should have said, wo unto the world, because of Popery. Wo unto the world, because of Turkism. Wo unto the world, because of the last judgment. Wo unto the world, for Popery, because thereby men should be punished in their souls. Wo unto the world, for Turkism, because thereby thousands should be murdered in their bodies by the Turkish armies. Wo unto the world, because of the last judgment, for thereby all worldlings should be

plagued both in body and soul in hell-fire
for evermore.

Since then these three last plagues which
were to come upon the world, are more
fearful and terrible than any of the other
four, no wonder though here is sent of pur-
pose a special messenger to give intelligence
thereof, that every man might look to him-
self, seeing such great dangers were at hand.
And for this cause also it is said before,
that there was silence in the church for the
space of half an hour.

C H A P. IX.

THE principle scope and design of this
chapter, is to point out both the Pope
and his clergy, and also the kingdom of
the Turk, and his cruel armies. For hav-
ing already set down how a way and paff-
age was made for the Pope to climb up in-
to his cursed chair, by the prevailing of he-
resies, the falling away of the pastors of
the church, and the great over-spreading
of darkness and ignorance; now he com-
eth to describe the Pope in his full heighth
and greatest exaltation, being now univer-
sal bishop, and in full possession of his seat

and sea of Rome, which was about six hundred years after Christ, as formerly hath been shewed. At what time Pope Boniface obtained of the emperor Phocas, that murderer, which slew his master Mauritius, the emperor, that the Bishop of Rome should be called the universal bishop, and the church of Rome, the head of all churches.

This ninth chapter may be divided into two parts: The first is a lively description of the Pope himself, his kingdom and his clergy. The second is a description of the kingdom of the Turk, and his most savage armies; so that this opening of the first two great woes mentioned before, concerning the Papacy and Turkism.

‘ And the fifth angel blew the trumpet,
‘ and I saw a star which fell from heaven,
‘ and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit,’ Rev. ix. 2.

Warning was given before, that when this fifth angel should blow the trumpet, a most fearful wo should come upon the world, surpassing all that went before, which is the setting up of Antichrist in his pride, that man of sin, that son of perdition.

The Pope is here compared to a star, as well as other godly ministers in this book, because the Bishops of Rome at the first

were godly and excellent men; for amongst the first thirty of them, there were some martyrs. But it is here said, that now this star was fallen from heaven unto the earth; that is, the bishops of Rome were greatly degenerated and fallen quite away from heavenly things to earthly; for they declin-ed from time to time, and grew worse and worse, so far as to become the great Anti-christ.

But some man may say, why may not this star falling from heaven upon the earth, be understood of other pastors falling from the truth, as well as the Pope, as it is tak-en in the former chapter, and in the twelfth chapter, and the fourth verfe? I answer, that the circumstances will not here bear it. Therefore to persuade every honest man's conscience, that this must needs be understood of the Pope in his pride, let us give ear to these three reasons following.

First, We are to consider, that the main design of the Holy Ghost in the opening of the seven seals, and blowing of the seven trumpets, is to lay out the state of the church in all ages, till the coming of Christ. Further, we are diligently to observe, that the things contained under the opening of the seventh seal (whereof the blowing of the seven trumpets are as it were parts, and do all belong unto it) do stretch even to

The end of the world, so as there is no strange accident, or any woful condition of the church in any age, but it is set forth under the opening of these seals, and blowing of these trumpets. But the Papacy was a state of the church, and that most woful and lamentable, therefore it is described under the opening of the seals, and blowing these trumpets. But is not described under the opening of any other seal, or blowing of any other trumpet: therefore of necessity it must be referred to this seventh seal, and the fifth trumpet; and this is my first reason. If any man object that the Pope and his kingdom are most lively described in the chapters from the twelfth to the last, I answer, that all those chapters belong to a new vision, wherein some things propounded under the opening of the seven seals are more fully opened and expounded. But this I say, that in the second vision, the whole estate of the church in every age is laid open, even until the last judgment; and therefore when the seventh angel here doth blow the seventh trumpet, immediately followeth the last judgment, as appeareth, Rev. x. 6.—xi. 15, 16.

My second reason is drawn from the course and consideration of times; for the great prevailing errors and heresies mentioned before, which made way for Anti-

christ, was from the first 300 years, until 600 years, and so forward. But now immediately upon this great increase of error and darkness, cometh the description of a special star fallen from heaven at this time, which was about 600 years after Christ, and therefore it must needs be understood of the Pope. And this is my second reason.

My third and last reason is drawn from the description of the Pope and his clergy, in the first eleven verses of this chapter; he is so lively described and pointed out in particulars, that all men that know him, or ever heard of him, must needs say it is he. For this description here set down by the Holy Ghost, can fitly agree to none other.

The Papists themselves do confess, that this star here mentioned, must needs be understood of some arch-heretic, and full wisely, forsooth, they apply it to Luther and Calvin. But we affirm, that it is to be understood of the Pope; for was there ever any such arch-heretic as he, which 'opposeth himself against all that is called 'God,' and against all imperial powers; as the apostle saith? But now let us proceed to the description of him.

First, He is said to have the key of the bottomless pit; which agreeth well to the Pope; for he hath power given him to open

hell's gates, to let in thousands thither; but no power to open heaven's gates, to let in thither; for he furthereth many to hell, none to heaven. He doth indeed falsely challenge to himself the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to let in and shut out at his pleasure. But here we see the Holy Ghost doth attribute no such power unto him, but only telleth us, that his power and jurisdiction is in hell, and as for heaven, he hath nothing to do with it. It were needless to shew how this metaphor of keys is taken for power and jurisdiction in the scriptures, as hath been proved before, Rev. i. 18. and as needless to prove that by the bottomless pit, is here meant hell, as appeareth from Rev. xi. 7.—xx. 1.

‘ And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose the smoke of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit,’ Rev. ix. 2.

Here we see how the Pope openeth hell's gates with his key, and a most horrible gross and stinking smoke ascendeth up into the air presently upon it, insomuch that both the sun and the air were darkened with it. Which all is to be understood of that spiritual darkness, ignorance, superstition and idolatry, wherewith the whole church was over-spread, after the great

Antichrist came to the possession of his cursed chair, and was in his pride and height, ruling and reigning over the kings of the earth. For then indeed the sun was darkened and eclipsed, that is the light of the gospel was almost clean put out. For that which is spoken here of the darkening of the air and the sun, is to be understood of a greater and more general darkness, than that which was mentioned in the former chapter, wherein but a third part of the world was darkened. But now the Antichrist invadeth the church, all is overspread with gross and palpable darkness, all is as dark as pitch: no man can see where he is, or which way he goeth. For the whole air is filled with this thick smoke, which came out of hell's pit.

‘And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power,’ Rev. ix. 3.

By these locusts is meant the Pope’s clergy, as abbots, monks, friers, priests, shavelings, and such like vermine; which are therefore compared to locusts, because they waste and destroy the church, even as locusts destroy the fruits of the earth. For both historians and travellers do affirm, that whole fields of green corn new come up, have been wasted and eaten up in one night.

as bare as the earth, by swarms of locusts in the East-countries. For in those parts of the world, multitudes of these little vermine are to be found: even so the Popish clergy consumeth and devoureth all green things in the church.

Moreover, it is to be noted, that these locusts came out of the smoke of the pit; that is, they were bred out of it: for monks, friars, priests, and such like caterpillers, were bred of ignorance, error, heresy, superstition, and the very smoke of hell: for from hell they came, and to hell they will go. They are descended of the black horse of hell, and thither they will return.

Moreover, it is said, that power was given them to sting like scorpions. For whom have they not stung with their most venomous stings? I mean, their damnable errors, and devilish devices. Whom they have not wounded with their corrupt doctrine and devilish authority? They are the forest soul-stingers that ever the world had, who have left their venomous stings in the souls of thousand thousands, wherewith they have been poisoned and stung to death.

‘And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those which have not the seal of God in their fore-heads,’ Rev. ix. 4.

It may be demanded, what became of the church, when as the whole earth was full of these crawling and stinging locusts? This question is now here answered, to wit, that these locusts are charged and commanded, that they should not hurt any of the elect: for this wo and this plague extendeth no farther than to the inhabitants of the earth, as we have heard before. Their power is limited only to the reprobate, they have nothing to do with God's chosen people. And here again we see what great care God hath for his people in the midst of the greatest dangers, as hath been twice noted before, Rev. vii. and viii. For now Antichrist reigning in his full pride, yet his elect are preserved in the midst of these scorpion-locusts, flying about their ears like swarms of hornets, not one of them is stung to death. Christ's little flock is always defended and set in safety.

' And to them was command given that they should not hurt them, but that they should be vexed five months, and that their pain should be as the pain that cometh of a scorpion, when he hath stung a man,' Rev. ix. 5.

Some write, that such as are stung with a scorpion do not die forthwith, but have a lingering pain, wherewith they are miserably vexed three or four days before they

die of it. Now unto this lingering pain is this spiritual stinging compared: for these locusts are commanded of God, that they should not kill the very reprobates outright and at once, but torment them with a lingering death for the space of five months, that is, five-hundred years: for so long did the Pope continue in his height and pride, full strength and vigour, and so long did the Pope and his clergy sting men with lingering and scorpion-like pain.

Therefore in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them, Rev. ix. 6.

This verse doth shew, that all Papists being thus stung and tormented in their consciences with this lingering pain of Popish doctrine, shall wish themselves out of the world, and buried quick, that they might be rid of their spiritual stinging, and hellish torments which they had in their conscience. For the Popish doctrine hath no found comfort in it, it leaveth men in desperation, in sickness, and upon their death-beds. For alas! what comfort can a poor distressed conscience have in Popes' pardons, indulgences, masses, dirges, merits, works, pilgrimages, purgatory, crosses, crucifixes, Agnus Dei's, and such like trash and trumpery? These, alas, are too weak remedies,

for any spiritual diseases: they are not sufficient to procure pardon at God's hands for any sin. Alas, the poor blind Papists did know and feel that they were vile sinners: they knew they must come to judgment: they knew that the reward of sin was death, even the second death: they knew all this full well, and therefore had horrible convulsions in their consciences, and knew not how to wind out of them. For the doctrine of free justification in the blood of Christ, was hid from them; they knew it not: and therefore all assurance of God's favour, all peace of conscience, and all joy in the Holy Ghost was utterly taken from them; and therefore many of them died in a most desperate and uncomfortable manner. And for this cause it is here said, that they sought death, and desired to be rid out of the world oneway or another: for a tormented conscience who can bear it? it is a kind of hell torment.

And the form of the locusts was like unto horses prepared unto battle, and on their heads were as it were crowns like unto gold; and their faces were like the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women: and their teeth were as the teeth of lions; Rev. ix. 7, 8.

Hitherto we have heard of the pedigree and poisoned stings of these vile locusts,

and how they vexed the inhabitants of the earth all the time of the great Antichrist. Now we are to understand of their form and likeness: for the Spirit of God doth hye point them out in their colours, that all men may discern them, and beware of them.

First. It is said that they were like unto horses prepared unto battle: that is, they were as strong and fieroe as barred horses, so rush and run upon all such as should but once mutter or murmur against them, or their authority: moreover, they have crowns of gold upon their heads, which sheweth and signifieth, that they were the conquerors of the earth, and lords of the world, and who but they? For in those days no man, say, no lord, no king durst speak against a monk, a friar, or a piled priest; for if any did, they were sure to smart for it. They had also faces like the faces of men; that is, they set fair faces upon matters, and pretended great devotion in religion, gathering the people, and making them believe that they could give them pardon of all their sins, and bring them to heaven, when as in very truth, for their bellies, and for their gain, they did cunningly smooth with the nobles, the rich and the mighty, setting fair faces upon their proceedings; and as St. Peter saith, 'Through covetous-

ness with feigned words; they made merchandise of men's souls,' 2 Pet. ii. 3. and did closely wind themselves into the hearts of the simple people, by their fawning insinuations, being in very deed most notable flatterers and hypocrites. They had hair as the hair of women, that is, they were altogether effeminate, being given to delicacy, lust and wantonness; they were drowned in whoredom and all kind of beastliness, being a shoal of the most filthy villanies. 'Their teeth were as the teeth of lions,' to catch and snatch at all they could come by. They devoured all the fat morsels every where, they got the church livings into their hands: they first made impropriations: they encroached upon temporal mens lands: they swallowed up all every where. If we look unto the abeys, priories, and nunneries, we may easily judge what teeth they had. Moreover, it is said they had habergions, like to the habergions of iron; that is, they were so strongly armed with the defence and countenance of the Pope, that no secular power durst once speak against them. Their wings were like the sound of chariots, when many horses run unto battle, that is, with flattering noise and terrible threatenings, they strove to uphold their kingdom. Also in churches and pulpits,

they make a roaring noise, and take on terribly to maintain their abominable idolatry, 'they had tails like unto scorpions; and 'there were stings in their tails.' For with their poisoned doctrine and stinging authority, like adders and snakes they stung many to death. Moreover, power was given them to hurt men five months, that is all the time of Antichrist's reign, as before hath been shewed.

'They have a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is named Apollyon, that is, 'destroying,' Rev. ix. 10, 11.

As the fowls have a king over them, which is the eagle; and the beasts, the lion, and mortal men, some chief governor, under whose protection and subjection they live: so here these hellish locusts are said to have a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, that is, the devil or the Pope, under whose ensign they fight, and under whose defence they live. Their king's name in Hebrew is called Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon. The words are both of one signification, that is, destroying: for both the devil himself, and his vicar the Pope, are destroyers and wasters of the church of God.

‘One wo is past, and behold yet two woes come after this.’ Rev. ix. 12.

We have heard at large what this first wo is, namely, the plague of the world, by the Pope and his clergy. Now we are to hear of the second wo, which is the most huge and murdering army of the Turks: wherein the third part of men were slain. Some do expound this second wo of the kingdom of Antichrist and his armies; but that it is not so, may appear by these reasons following.

First, The angel denouncing wo, wo, wo, denounceth three several woes, and therefore it is said: ‘One wo is past, and behold yet two woes come after this.’ It followeth then that this is a distinct and several wo from the former and therefore cannot be the same.

Secondly, This wo containeth specially a bodily slaughter of the third part of the world, and of the wicked reprobates: but the first wo was specially a plague of mens souls, as we have heard, and therefore this cannot be the same with the first.

Thirdly, We are to understand, that this book describeth all the greatest calamities and plagues that should come upon the world in any age after Christ, and therefore we may justly think, that the kingdom of the Turks is not left out, seeing it was one

of the greatest plagues that ever came upon the world. But the kingdom of the Turks is described in no other part of this revelation, and therefore must of necessity be here described.

‘ Then the sixth angel blew the trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four corners of the golden altar, which is before God.’

Rev. ix. 13.

‘ Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.’

Rev. ix. 14.

Now we are come to the description of the second wo, which followeth upon the blowing of the sixth trumpet by the sixth angel. And first of all he saith, ‘ He heard a voice from the four corners of the golden altar.’ By the golden altar, is meant Christ as before hath been shewed, with the reasons thereof. From this altar the voice cometh to the ‘ angel which blew the sixth trumpet,’ Rev. viii. 3. that we might know it is the voice of the mighty God, and the commandment of our Lord Jesu. The voice commandeth the sixth angel to ‘ loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.’ By these four angels, which are thus bound at Euphrates, is meant many devils and angels of darkness, as we have heard before,

Rev. vii. 1. Their binding signifieth their restraint, by which they were held back from doing that mischief which they desired to do. Their loosing signifieth, that power was given them to perform that which they wished.

They are said to be four in number, because they should raise an horrible plague in the four corners of the earth, both east, west, north, and south. The sense is, that the devils have yet farther and greater scope given them to plague and destroy the inhabitants of the earth. These devils had exceeding great power in the kingdom of Antichrist, but they are unsatiable in mischief, and so after a sort lie still bound till they have their desire. The place where they lie bound, is Euphrates, wherein is a mystery: for Euphrates literally taken, is a great river, which ran so nigh the city Babylon in Chaldea, that it was a mighty defence unto it, so that the city could not be taken; until they that laid siege unto it, cut out trenches; and derived the waters another way. Now for the mystery, it is this: Rome in this book is called Babylon, by a metaphor, and after the same manner, the great river Euphrates, as we shall see afterward, chap. xvi. signifieth the power, wealth, and authority which that city Rome, even this western Babel, hath to

defend itself. Then it followeth, that in this power, authority and strength of Rome, the devils lie bound, for they waited through the power of Rome, to work yet far greater mischief, and therefore are said to be bound, so long as they were restrained. The mischief which they plotted and purposed to bring to pass by the authority and power of Rome, was the hatching and bringing forth of the Mahometish religion, which in very deed did spring from the darkness of Rome, as from his proper root and original cause.

The devils did foresee, that out of the superstitions and idolatries of Rome, defended by their great power and authority, Mahometish religion, might very well be framed, and therefore not being content to plague the west part of the world with popery and idolatry, they do greedily desire also to plague the East part of the world with the false religion of Mahomet. They are not satisfied with plaguing and poisoning all Europe with abominable idolatries, except also they plague and infect all Asia and Africa with the Turks most execrable religion: so insatiable are the devils in working mischief. Now in the mean time they think themselves too much straitened, bound and tied up in Rome and Romish religion, except they may be loosed; and

proceed further to overspread the whole world with all impieties, and horrible abominations. A man would think that when the devil had prevailed so far, as to place Antichrist in his cursed chair, and to breed the swarms of locusts out of the smoke of hell, they might have been satisfied: for then, as we say, hell seemed to be broke loose. But yet all this cannot satisfy the unsatiable devil, but they will have the religion of Mahomet established to poison and plague all the East parts of the world in their souls; and also they will have the most huge, cruel, and savage armies of the Turks raised up, to murder and massacre millions of men in their bodies, in the West part of the world; as presently we shall hear. Now till all this be effected, they are said to lie bound at Rome. But here we see, that this sixth angel hath a precise commandment from Jesus Christ, to loose these devils which lay bound at the great river Euphrates, that they might plague the whole world far and near, at their pleasure: so now all the devils of hell are let loose, and let us hear what followeth.

‘And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared at an hour, at a day, at a month, and at a year, to slay the third part of men.’ Rev. ix. 15.

Now the devils being loosed and unbound

by a special commandment from Christ, were in a readiness to execute their mischief. This ascending by decrees from a short time unto longer and longer; 'From 'an hour to a day,' &c. doth signify, that as the devils were prest, and at hand at an hours warning, as we say, to put in practice whatsoever they had plotted; so they were as forward to continue the same, 'From 'an hour to a day, from a day to a month, 'and from a month to a year,' that is, from time to time, until the date of their commission was out; for their time was limited, and their commission bounded, as afterward we shall see. And this is our comfort, that both the Papacy is limited to five months, and the Turkism to hours, days, months, and years. The divers power is limited, though it grieveth them full sore: They cannot do what they list, they cannot continue as long as they would.

'After the number of horse-mén of war, 'were twenty thousand times ten thousand, 'for I heard the number of them,' Rev. ix. 16,

Now, upon the loosing of these devils, here followeth the description of a most horrible plague which they raised up; and it is a huge army, a murdering army, an army in number exceeding great; for he saith, 'They were twenty thousand times

‘ten thousand;’ that is, two hundred millions, or two hundred thousand ten thousands. But we may not think that this army was ever all at one time, or in any one age, but here are the armies of many ages reckoned up, and the full plague of many years set forth. How could St. John number such an army, may some man say? He answereth this doubt, and saith, ‘He heard the number of them.’ He did not number them; but the number was told him.

Moreover, it is to be noted, that as this army did exceed in number, so also in terror and strength; and therefore they are said to be all horsemen. For an army of horsemen are both more strong and more terrible, than an army of footmen.

‘And thus I saw the horses in a vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth: and of brimstone, and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths went forth fire and smoke, and brimstone.’ Rev. ix. 17.

Here is the description of the horse-men and horses, as they appeared to John in a vision. *First*, Touching the horse-men, it is said, that they were very well armed with habergions; that is, coats of mail, corslets, or curets, and that of ‘a fiery colour, and of the colour of jacinth;

that is of smoke, appeareth in the last clause of this verse, and also 'of the colour of brimstone.' For as horse-men in complete armour were wont to wear in their breast-plates and targets certain ensigns and colours, whereby they might be made terrible to their enemies: So these Turkish warriors and horse-men do hold out their colours of fire, smoke, and brimstone, as it were flags of defiance against the whole world, threatening present death to all that should withstand them, or as if they meant to spit fire and flame at them, or to choke them with smoke and brimstone, and then burn them up with fire and brimstone. All this their colours and ensigns in their breast-plates and habergions did portend. Now, as concerning horses, no doubt they were as fierce as the horse-men. They wear great lances; they had 'heads like lions;' that is, they were full of anger and fierceness, 'and out of their mouths went forth fire, and smoke, and brimstone.' Rev. ix. 18. that is, they had the same colours and ensigns upon them that riders had.

'Of these three was the third part of men killed, that is, of the fire, and of the smoke, and of the brimstone, which came out of their mouths.'

Here is set down the great slaughters and massacres which these martial horse-men

and Turkish armies made throughout the most part of Europe. For he saith, ‘the third part of men,’ that is, great numbers in Europe ‘were slain by the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone, which came out of their mouths:’ that is, by their bloody cruelty, and barbarous inhumanity, some being murdered in their bodies by cruel death, and others violently drawn to the wicked religion of Mahomet. For partly by external violence, and partly by a subtile shew of religion and devotion, they destroyed thousands both in their souls and bodies. And therefore it is said, ‘Their power is in their mouths, and in their tails,’ for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads wherewith they hurt. But for the better understanding of these things, I think it not amiss a little to open and lay forth the rising up, and increasing of the power of the Turk.

About the year of our Lord five hundred and ninety one, was Mahomet born, in a certain village of Arabia, called Itrarix, for so histories do report. This Mahomet, by fraud and coozenage, grew into great credit and fame among the seditious Arabians and Egyptians, insomuch that they made him a captain over them, to war against the Persians.

After this, he married a rich wife, and

by that means he won the hearts of many with gifts. In the days of Heraclius the emperor, which was in the year of our Lord 623, he grew to be very mighty. After this he feigned himself to be a prophet; and said that he had visions and revelations, and talked with angels. And so by the help of Sergius, a monk, he framed a new worship and religion; a patched part out of the Old Testament, partly from the Papists, and partly from the heathen. He reigned nine years, and so died.

After him succeeded in the kingdom of the Saracens, Ebubezar, who reigned two years. Haumar who reigned twelve years. Muhavia who reigned twenty-four years. All these made great war against the Persians, and sundry other nations, and overcame them, and set up the religion of Mahomet against them, and so the kingdom of the Saracens grew mighty: but in process of time the kingdom of the Turks grew great, and the kingdom of the Saracens diminished. Within a short time after this, the Tartarians, a barbarous people, waxed strong and made war against the Turks, and prevailed greatly for a time. But about the year of our Lord 1300 the empire of the Tartarians was over-thrown, and the empire of the Turks did flourish more than ever before: for now came the great-

est monsters, and most savage and cruel tyrants of all. The first of them was Ottomanus. The second Bajazethes. The third Amurathes. These made bloody wars against the Christians. I mean the Papists in Europe, and enlarged the Turks dominions very far.

They did from time to time so cruelly murder and massacre the inhabitants of the West, with their huge and bloody armies, that at last both the Pope, the emperor, the king of Hungary, the king of Poland, the king of France, the duke of Burgundy, and the duke of Venice, and almost all the potentates in Europe, did join together to make war against the Turks, with great armies, but yet could not prevail; so strong were the Turks; so huge and dreadful were their armies: then we see that verified which here was foretold, to wit, 'that the monstrous armies of the Turks with their horses and horse-men, should slay the third part of men:' that is, the idolaters in Europe, by heaps and infinite numbers. To set down the particular battles betwixt the Turks and the Christians in Europe, and their horrible blood-shedding, would require a volume; but this which I have briefly set down, may serve to give some light unto it, and may suffice for the understanding of this text. Now it is said in the

next verse, that notwithstanding this heavy hand of God, which was upon the Papists in Europe, and these fearful judgments and massacres, they repented not of their idolatries, but waxed worse and worse: for no judgments, no plagues can make the wicked any whit better, as we see in the examples of Pharaoh and Saul. And here it is said, ‘ That the remnant of men which were killed by these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they shouldnot worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood which neither can see, nor hear, nor talk. Also they repented not of their murder, and of their sorceries, neither of their fornication, nor of their theft,’ Rev. ix. 20, 21. And thus we see how the devils which were bound at Euphrates, being let loose upon the world, in the wrath and just judgment of God, did fearfully plague both the Turks, in their souls, and the Papists in their bodies. The one with false religion, the other with bloody swords: and so was the desire of the devil fully satisfied.

C H A P. X.

HAVING opened and expounded the two first woes which fell out upon the blowing of the fifth and sixth trumpet, containing the two great plagues of Popery and Turkism, wherewith the world was punished many hundred years: now in this chapter we are to hear of good news, and great comfort, after so much sorrow. For here Jesus Christ cometh down from heaven to deliver his poor afflicted church, and to be revenged of all his cruel enemies. For now before the third and last wo, containing the greatest plague of all upon the world, which is, the last judgment: wherein the wicked shall be tormented in hell-fire for ever, both in body and soul, I say, before the blowing of the seventh trumpet, by the seventh angel, of which we shall hear in the next chapter. Now in the mean time is shewed in this chapter, what care God had for his little flock, which no doubt were hid in those days, and did not appear and yet were scattered in corners, even in the midst of the darkness of Popery, and the most furious and hellish rage of the Turkish armies. And therefore the principle scope of this chapter, is to shew how the gospel should be preached in many

kingdoms: Now after this general darkness for the discovering and overthrow; both of Popery and Turkism, and to shew what should fall out in the church now in the middle time, before the seventh and last trumpet blow: for then cometh the last judgment, as the angel sweareth in this chapter, verse 6, 7.

This chapter doth contain four principle parts.

First, A description of Christ and his glory.

Secondly, Shewing how the gospel should be preached in many nations and kingdoms, by the ministers of this last age, whereby all adversary power should be overthrown.

Thirdly, A watch-word, given to the world by Christ, that when the seventh angel should blow the trumpet, the world should end.

Lastly, To show, how all faithful preachers being called and authorized by Christ, should travel and take pains in the study of God's book, and afterward should publish the knowledge thereof far and near.

‘And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rain-bow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of brass,’ Rev. x. 1.

This angel of might is Christ, as appear-
eth by the description of him, and by all
the consequents following: for he is said to
be 'cloathed with a cloud,' which signi-
fieth his great glory and majesty: 'For he
' shall come in the clouds of heaven to
' judge the world;' that is, with great
pomp and glory. 'The rain-bow was up-
' on his head,' which signifieth the cove-
nant of peace with his church, as before,
Rev. iv. 3. 'His face was as the sun,'
which signifieth, comfort and deliverance
to his church, and the dispelling of all the
smoke of the bottomless pit, as the sun
scattereth and driveth away the thick mists.

'His feet are pillars of brass,' which signifieth that he should tread down all his enemies under his feet, both Pope and Turk: 'For he must reign till he have de-
' stroyed them all,' 1 Cor. xv. 25. The Pope a long time kept all the kings of Eu-
rope in subjection. The locusts were of
great power. The Turks prevailed exceed-
ingly. But what are they all to this mighty
and glorious angel, Christ? What is their
power to withstand him? What can Abad-
don, the king of the locusts do, against this
mighty king of Zion? What can the Turks
most terrible horses and horse-men do a-
gainst this angel which sitteth upon the
white-horse? Alas, alas, they are able to

do nothing. They must all be trode down under his feet of brafs.

' And he had in his hand a little book open, and he put his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth,' Rev. x. ii.

This little book signifieth the Bible.

It is called little in respect of the great and huge volumes of Popish books, though in itself it be large.

It is said to be open, that all men might look into it, because it had been shut a long time before, even during all the time of the darkening of the sun and air, by the smoke which came out of the bottomless pit. But although it was long shut up in the time of Popery, and lay buried in a strange tongue: yet now it is opened, and publicly preached unto all the servants of God. And all this no doubt is to be understood of Luther's time, and all the times ever since the gospel was spread abroad after the great darkness. For some hundred years ago it was hard to find an English Bible, but now God be thanked, there are thousands to be found in the hands of God's people. And therefore the things here prophesied of, are fulfilled in our days: for we live under the opening of the seventh seal, and the blowing of the sixth trumpet, and the pouring forth of

the sixth vial, as here doth partly appear, and shall, God willing, be made more manifest when we come to the sixteenth chapter. Now we are diligently to observe that as the opening of this book, and the preaching of the gospel by Luther and his successors, hath dispersed the former darkness, and beaten down Popery; ~~for~~ also hath it driven back the Turk, and taken from us all fear of him, which in former ages was the terror of the world; for since men have looked into this book, repented of their idolatry, and turned unto God with all their hearts, the Turk and his power hath not been feared, especially in these parts where the gospel is preached.

For God in his merciful providence towards his church, hath diverted his power another way, and set him to work elsewhere. So that if men cannot be brought to believe, that God raised him up as a scourge for idolaters, and a plague for idolatry and other foul sins, according to the words in the former chapter, where it is said, 'They repented not of the works of their hands,' &c. yet when they see, that at the opening of the book of God, and forsaking idolatry, the fear of him is removed, let them believe it. What can be more plain, than that this open book in the hand of an angel, hath delivered us

from the Pope, and from the Turk? A most happy opening of this blessed book.

Further it is said, that ' he put his right foot upon the sea, and his left on the earth.' The setting of Christ's right-foot upon the sea, signifieth that he is ruler of the sea, and standeth as firmly upon the sea as upon the land. The setting of his left foot upon the earth, doth signify, that he is Lord of the earth and true heir of all things in it.

' And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth, and when he cried, seven thunders uttered their voices,' Rev. x. 3.

This crying with a loud voice, like the roaring of a lion, doth signify the manifestation of the wrath of Christ against all his enemies: for now he beginneth to roar against them, as a lion when he is hungry roareth for his prey. Therefore now both the scorpion, locusts, and the fierce horses and horsemen are like to go to the pot.

By the seven thunders which uttered their voices, is meant those perfect and exquisite judgments which now were to be inflicted both upon the kingdom of the Pope and the Turk. We have heard before, that seven is a perfect number in this book: and that thunder is put for the thundering of God's wrath, and all such broils and plagues

as follow thereupon, and this is the reason of this interpretation.

‘ And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write, ‘ but I heard a voice from heaven, saying ‘ unto me: Seal up these things which the ‘ seven thunders have spoken, and write ‘ them not,’ Rev. x. 4.

It should seem these seven thunders did so speak, as they might be understood, for John was about to write the things which they spake, thinking that they were uttered for that end and purpose, that he should deliver them in writing to the churches. But he receiveth a commandment to the contrary, for he is not permitted to write them, but to conceal them until the appointed time.

But some man may say; Why were they uttered, seeing they must be concealed and kept close? I answer, it was not in vain: for first, though the particulars be not expressed what the thunders speak: yet here we are taught, that there remain most fearful judgments against all the oppressors of the church, which Christ hath thundered out with terror against them. And when the time determined is come, they shall be seen and understood: but in the mean time, they are sealed up and kept close according to that of Job. ‘ Why should not the times

‘ be hid of the Almighty, so as they which
‘ know him, should not perceive the times
‘ appointed of him?’ And that of Daniel,
‘ These things are sealed up until the time
‘ determined.’

‘ And the angel which I saw stand upon
‘ the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his
‘ hand to heaven. And sware by him that
‘ liveth for evermore, which created hea-
‘ ven, and the things that therein are; and
‘ the earth, and the things that therein are;
‘ and the sea, and the things that therein
‘ are, that time should be no more. But
‘ in the days of the voice of the seventh
‘ angel; when he shall begin to blow the
‘ trumpet, even the ministry of God shall
‘ be finished, as he hath declared unto his
‘ servants the prophets,’ Rev. x. 5, 6, 7.

The sum of these three verses is, that Christ giveth warning of the last judgment, that men might awake and look out in time. And because men for the most part are careless and secure, ‘ putting the evil day far from them,’ as the prophet speaketh, therefore, here Christ bindeth it with a solemn oath, and solemn gestures thereunto annexed, as was the lifting up of the hand in ancient time, Gen. xiv. 22. The thing that our Lord Jesus disposeth, is, that ‘ time shall be no more;’ that is, time as it is now, or the state of things as they be

now: but he telleth us plainly, that as ~~six~~ angels have already blown their trumpets, so when 'the seventh angel should blow, 'the mystery of God shall be finished:' that is, the time of punishing the wicked, and rewarding the godly, should come, which is therefore called a mystery, because the world understandeth it not: they think there is no such matter.

'They imagine there is no reward for the just, or punishment for the wicked,' Mal. iii. 14. But the Holy Ghost saith, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous: 'doubtless there is a God which judgeth the earth,' Psal. lviii. 18. And here it is said, 'that God hath declared it to his servants the prophets.'

'And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth. So I went unto the angel, and said unto him, give me the little book. And he said unto me, take it, and eat it up, and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth, as sweet as honey. Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and eat it up, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey: but when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said un-

‘to me, Thou must prophecy again among the people, and nations, and tongues, and to many kings,’ Rev. x. 8, 9, 10, 11.

The brief sense of these four verses is, that the preachers of the gospel being called, allowed, and authorized by Christ unto their ministry, should study the scriptures with great diligence, even until they had eaten up the book of God, and they should preach and publish unto all nations and kingdoms that truth of God, and doctrine of the gospel, which now a long time had been hid in the reign of Antichrist. It is to be observed, that John in this place representeth the person of all the ministers of the gospel, which should be raised up in these last days, for the overthrow of Antichrist; and the restoration of true religion, for John himself did not live to those times.

Further, it is to be noted, that all godly students and zealous ministers do eat up the book of God by reading, study, prayer, and meditation, and they find it sweet in their mouth, that is, they find and feel great joy and comfort in the study and meditation thereof, especially when God revealeth thereby great and hid secrets unto them, and giveth them to understand the mysteries of the gospel, and counsels of his will, which are locked up from the wise

and prudent of this world. This I say, is sweeter unto their mouth than honey, and the honey comb. Concerning the phrase of eating up the book, look Ezekiel ii. 9. for here the Holy Ghost alludeth thereunto.

This book being so sweet in the mouth, yet being eaten and digested, is bitter in the belly.

There may be three reasons yielded for this bitterness:

First, Because it being once taken down into our soul by godly meditation, doth mortify our corrupt nature, and bring under our lust, and therefore seemeth bitter to flesh and blood.

Secondly, Because afflictions and trials do always necessarily follow the sound digestion of the gospel.

Thirdly, Because the doctrine of the gospel being swallowed by the ministers thereof, must not be kept to themselves, as it were closed up in their stomachs, but they must spit out with it again, as if it were some loathsome and bitter thing, which must needs be cast up again. And for this cause it is said in the last verse, that 'they must prophesy again among the people, and nations, and tongues, and many kings.' Now blessed be the name of the Lord our God, who hath given us to live in this age, where-

in we do with our eyes behold and see the fulfilling of all these things: let us therefore praise God for this great work which we see wrought in our days and let us still more and more magnify this little book, which will utterly destroy Popery, and bring down the proud Antichrist, do all that fight for him what they can.

C H A P. XI.

WE have heard that the little book should be opened, and the gospel preached and published to many nations and kingdoms, after the great darkness of Popery, and that this was done by Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Peter, Virit, Peter Martyr, Bullinger, Bucer; and all their faithful successors unto this day. Now in this chapter we are to understand the effect and good success of their preaching and publishing the gospel, which was, that the church should be restored, reformed, and built up thereby, which a long time had been wasted and oppressed by the tyranny of Antichrist, and that many should embrace this gospel, forsake their idolatries, and turn unto God with all their hearts, yea,

whole nations and kingdoms in Europe should be converted to the faith, as we see this day, God be praised. So then the principle aim of this chapter is, to shew those things which yet remain to be fulfilled under the blowing of the sixth trumpet, which is the preaching and prevailing of the gospel, even unto the worlds end: and also the things which follow upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, which is the resurrection and last judgment.

This chapter containeth six principle things, as it were six parts thereof.

Firstly, It sheweth how the true church should be gathered together, and built up by the preaching of the gospel, and all the wicked refused and cast out.

Secondly, It describeth the builders, that is, all the faithful ministers which had, and should resist Antichrist.

Thirdly, It sheweth how Antichrist should persecute the preachers and professors of the gospel unto death, and murder them by heaps.

Fourthly, It sheweth that Papists, Atheists and wicked worldlings, should rejoice in the death of God's people, and not vouchsafe them so much as the honour of burial, but send gifts one to another for joy that they were rid out of the earth.

Fifthly, It sheweth that notwithstanding

the rage and fury of the world, in persecuting them to death, God should not only receive their souls to glory, but also raise up others endued with the same spirit, which should preach, profess, and witness the same truth constantly and continually, even unto the end of the world.

Lastly, It sheweth, that after the preaching of the gospel some good time in this last age, the seventh angel should blow the trumpet, and the world should end.

‘ And there was given unto me, a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood by, saying, Arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.’ Rev. xi. 1.

Here Jesus Christ giveth a reed unto John like unto a rod, and hereupon he is commanded by an angel to go about the measuring of the temple, altar, &c.

By this measuring with a reed like a rod, is signified the restoring and building up of God’s house, which now was greatly ruined, and run into decay through the long prevailing of Popery. Measuring with a reed, is taken for the building up of God’s church, after the decayed estate thereof, both in Ezekiel, Zechariah, and this prophecy. John in the persons of all faithful ministers, hath this measuring rod given him, because the church was to be restored

and built up by the ministers and ministry of the gospel.

The thing to be measured is the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein.

This is an allusion to the legal worship, whereby our spiritual worship is represented. For by the material temple, is meant the spiritual temple, or church of God. By the altar of stone, is meant the spiritual worship. By them that worship therein with carnal sacrifices, is meant all the true members of the church, which worship God in spirit and truth.

Now then, both the church, the true worship and worshippers, were all to be measured, repaired, and built up by ministry of the word, which all were decayed and almost laid waste, by the Pope's tyranny.

‘But the court which is without the temple cast out and measure it not, for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under their foot two and forty months.’ Rev. xi. 2.

John is here forbidden to measure and build up the court which is without the temple. Whereby is meant all heretics; hypocrites, worldlings, and all such as have a place in the church, but are not of the church. This phrase of speech is taken from the old shadowish worship as the rest

before. For in the temple of Jerusalem there was an outward court which was common to all good and bad: the holy place which was proper to the priests and Levites; and the holy of holiest, or most holy place, where none might come but the high priest only.

Here is a reason added why the Lord God refuseth all Papists and hypocrites, and all such as belong to the outward court only, and it is this: that this outward court 'is given unto the Gentiles,' that is, to all false Christians and counterfeits in religion, which are members of the visible church, but have nothing to do with the invisible.

These are compared to Gentiles in two respects: *First*, In regard of profaneness, for they are as profane as the heathen. *Secondly*, In respect of persecuting the truth: for hypocrites and Atheists are as forward in persecuting the people of God as the heathen emperors, which persecuted the church by the space of three hundred years. All comes in this, that when the church should be gathered and built by the preaching of the gospel, God would have all Papists, Atheists, and hypocrites shut out.

Moreover, here is the second reason yielded, why the outward court should be cast out, and not measured; to wit, because 'they should tread the holy city under

‘ foot, forty and two months:’ that is, they should persecute the church all the time of Antichrist’s reign. For forty two months in this verse; and one thousand two hundred and sixty days in the next verse: and ‘ three days and a half,’ verse 9. ‘ and time, times, and half a time,’ in the twelfth chaptér, the fourteenth verse, and one thousand two hundred and sixty days in the twelfth chapter, the sixth verse, do signify all one thing, which is the short reign of Antichrist; for these months, these days, and these times, do every one of them make three years and an half, for who knoweth not that forty two months make just three years and an half, and that one thousand two hundred and sixty days, maketh even so much also: and by time he meaneth a year, by times, two years, and by half a time, half a year. Now the reason why Antichrist’s reign is numbered by days, months and half times, and all amounting but to three years and a half, is to note the short continuancē thereof, for the comfort of the church, as appeareth more fully and plainly in sundry places of this prophesy, where it is set down in plain words, that Antichrist should reign but a short time; for what is five or six hundred years in comparison of eternity.

But here the Papists do shew themselves

most fottish and ridiculous, in that they would gather from hence, that the Pope is not Antichrist: for (say they) Antichrist shall reign but three years and an half, but the Pope hath reigned many years, therefore the Pope is not Antichrist.

Now to answer the proposition of their argument taken from this place. *First*, it may be answered, that this place is not to be understood literally, but mystically: as many other things in this book.

Secondly, Here is a certain number put for an uncertain, a definite number for an indefinite, which also is usual in this book, as we heard before concerning the sealing of the tribes, of every tribe twelve thousand, which maketh a hundred and forty four thousand. Now no man is so mad as to think there were just so many sealed, and neither more nor less.

Thirdly, Here is an allusion to Daniel's weeks, and other prophetical computations, wherein sometimes a day is put for a year, a week for seven years, as in Daniel's seven months and a month for thirty years. So then I conclude that it is extreme folly to interpret this place literally. The curious and frivolous interpretations of this place, and such like in this book, by some writers, I do of purpose omit, as matters untrue, unsound, and unjudicial: for I only in this

book seek the sense that is, and not the sense which is not, as hath been said before.

‘But I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth.’ Rev. xi. 3.

Having set down how Antichrist and his company, being those Gentiles which possess the outward court, should tread down the holy city, that is, the true church of God for a short time, now he cometh to shew, that even in the height and pride of the Pope’s power and government, yet the church was not utterly extinct, God did never utterly forfaine it, but in all ages, and at all times, God raised up one or other to withstand all Popish proceedings, which is here meant by the two witnesses. For assuredly these two witnesses do not signify Enoch and Elias, as the Papists and some others do dream; but they signify all the faithful preachers and professors of the truth, which in all ages both former and latter have opposed themselves against the Pope, his clergy, his doctrine, his religion, and all his abominable proceedings.

They are called witnesses, because they should bear witness unto the truth.

They are said to be two in number, for three reasons:

First, Because they were very few in those days when Popery did so generally prevail; for two is the smallest number.

Secondly, Because the law of God doth admit of no less number in witness bearing, as it is written ‘in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word stand.’

Thirdly, It is an allusion to Zorobabel, and Jehoshua, which were the two restorers and builders of the temple after the captivity: Christ saith here, that ‘he will give power to his two witnesses:’ for no man hath any power in heavenly things, except it be given him from above: and especially to stand fast to the truth in the heat of persecutions and troubles.

It is said, that these ‘two witnesses shall prophecy:’ that is, preach, declare, and speak. For so prophecy is taken in the former chapter and last verse: so also in other places of the scripture.

The time of their prophesying, being 1260 days, hath been expounded before.

These two witnesses are cloathed in ‘sackcloth,’ which signifieth that they should lead a sorrowful life here in this world. For in old times when men did fast and mourn, they did use to put on sack-cloth. It followeth then that these faithful ~~preachers and witnesses~~ of the truth, did not spend their days in mirth, jollity, and

worldly pomp and brevity, as did the Pope's clergy, and pompous prelates of Antichrist.

Now if any man will demand how this may appear, that there have been always some raised up of God, to write, preach, declare, and speak against the whore of Babylon, even when she was aloft and reigned as the queen and lady of the world: I answer, that histories are very plentiful in this point; which at large do shew, that in all countries and kingdoms of Europe, there were ever some stirred up to impugne and resist the whore of Babylon: viz.

In England,

Robert Grostet, bishop of Lincoln, 1293.
John Wickliff, supported by Edward the III.
and divers of the nobility in England, in

1400.

In Germany,

Taulerus a preacher, *Anno, 1354.*

Franciscus Petrarcha, 1356.

Johannes de rupe scissa, 1357.

Conradus Hager, 1359.

Gerhardus Rhidor, 1359.

Petrus de Corbona, 1360.

Johannes de Poliaco, 1420.

John Zisca, 1420.

In Bohemia,

John Husse, 1414.

Jerome of Prague, 1416.

Mathias Parisiensis, 1317.

In Spain,

Arnoldus de Nova Villa, 1250.

In Italy,

Jerome Savanarola, a monk, 1500.

Silvester, a friar, 1500.

In France,

Waldas, of whom came the Waldenses, or poor men of Lions in France, 1160.

Guilielmus de sancto amore, 1252.

Robertus Gallus, 1290.

Laurentius, 1290.

In Ireland,

Armachanus, an archbishop, 1362.

In Suevia,

Many preachers at once, 1240.

In Greece,

All the churches of Greece renounced the church of Rome for her abominable idolatry, 1230.

It were too tedious to recite all, which the historians report to have withstood both Pope and Popery, even when it did most of all bear the sway: these may suffice for the understanding of the text. As for those which have been raised up since the decay and fall of Popery, I mean since Luther's time, they are so many, and so well known, that I need say nothing.

‘ These are the two olive trees, and two

‘ candlesticks standing before the God of the earth,’ Rev. xi. 4.

Here the two witnesses are compared to two olive trees, because that as the olive tree doth drop down his oil and fatness, so the faithful ministers do drop down upon the church the sweet oil of the Spirit, which is all heavenly and spiritual graces, as the metaphor of oil is often so taken in the scriptures.

They are also compared to two candlesticks, because that as the candlestick beareth up the candle set upon it, so the ministers of the gospel bear up and hold forth the light of God’s word, even in the greatest darkness.

These candlesticks are said ‘ to stand before the God of the earth:’ because God beareth rule, not only in heaven, but in earth also, even then when all things in the earth seem to be most troubled, and the church militant under greatest persecutions, as now it was.

‘ And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouths, and shall devour their enemies: for if any will hurt them, so must he be killed. These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophesying, and have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with all man-

‘ner of plagues, as oft as they will.’ Rev. xi. 5, 6.

Here is shewed, that if any despise the simplicity of these two witnesses, and offer them wrong because of their baseness and contempt in the world, that there is a fire cometh out of their mouth, that is, the fiery and mighty power of the word of God, uttered out of their mouths, which overthroweth and overturneth their enemies; nay, as fire it consumeth them to ashes: for the ministers of the gospel are armed ‘with ready vengeance against all disobedience.’ Therefore they are quite mad, and know not what they do, which oppose themselves against the true ministers of Christ. For the sword which they fight with slayeth the reprobates in their souls, though not in their bodies: for the ministry of the word is the favour of death to all unbelievers.

That which is here spoken of ‘shutting the heavens that it rain not; and turning the waters into blood,’ Rev. xi. 6. is an allusion to Elias and Moses: whereof the one by his prayer shut the heavens; the other by his rod turned the waters into blood. Now the faithful ministers of the gospel are compared to these two, not because they should work such outward miracles as they did, but because they should

be furnished with spiritual power, which is far greater. For most sure it is, that the invisible and spiritual power, wherewith the ministers of the gospel are armed, is very great and glorious, though the world see it not, nor know it not. For the apostle saith, 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, mighty through God to cast down holds, casting down the imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God,' 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

'And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and kill them,' Rev. xi. 7.

Here is set down the greatest cruelty and bloody tyranny which Antichrist should use against these faithful witnesses of our Lord Jesus. For although they overcome him with the spiritual sword, which is the fire that cometh out of their mouths: yet for a time power was given to this beast that cometh out of the bottomless pit, that is, the Pope and his adherents to murder God's saints with the material sword: but yet note that Antichrist can do nothing, till the two witnesses have finished their testimony; such is God's care and providence for all his faithful servants.

'And their corps shall lie in the streets

‘ of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord also was crucified.’ Rev. xi. 8.

By the great city, here is meant Rome; and yet not the city only of Rome, but all the Roman empire, power, and jurisdictions, as afterward shall be made manifest. Now the corps and dead carcases, which were murdered and massacred in all nations by Antichrist’s tyranny, are here said to lie in the streets of Rome, that is, to be cast forth into the open fields, as not worthy the honour of burial, in all places, countries, and kingdoms within the Roman empire or jurisdiction of Rome, as we read to have been in England, Scotland, France, Ireland, Germany, and Spain. And as the Holy Ghost saith, ‘ The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat to the fowls of the heaven; and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.’

Moreover, it is to be observed, that Rome is here compared spiritually, or by a trope, to Sodom, and Egypt. To Sodom for filthiness; for what city ever was, or is more filthy than Rome, ‘ the mother of whoredoms and abominations of the earth.’ Rev. xvii. 5. And to Egypt for idolatry, and keeping God’s people in spiritual bondage.

Last of all, it is here said, that our Lord

Jesus was crucified at Rome, which may seem strange, since all men know, that Christ was crucified at Jerusalem. But to answer this doubt, we are to understand, that in respect of the place, our Lord Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem: but if we respect the power and authority that put him to death, he was crucified at Rome: for Christ was put to death by a Roman judge, by Roman laws, by Roman authority, by a kind of death proper only to the Romans, and in a place which then was within the Roman empire: and for this cause it is here said, that Christ was crucified at Rome.

‘And they of the people, and kindreds,
‘and tongues, and Gentiles, shall see their
‘corps three days and a half, and shall not
‘suffer their corps to be put in the grave,’
Rev. xi. 9.

Hitherto we have heard of the rage of Antichrist against the two witnesses: Now further we are to understand of the malice and fury of all his adherents, that is, all Papists, Atheists, and the rest of the blind people and seduced multitude, which did allow the Pope’s cruelty in shedding the blood of the martyrs; and they do testify the allowance and approbation of the Pope’s fact, and also their own malice and madness against them in this; that they will not vouchsafe them the honour of burial, but

cast out their dead bodies as carrion, or as the dead bodies of dogs or swine: thereby shewing that they esteemed them no better than such. Nay, we read that their hellish rage and madness was so great and outrageous, that they poured forth their malice upon the dead bones and carcases of God's saints and martyrs. For their bloody and most malicious minds could not be satisfied except they digged up the bodies of God's witnesses out of their graves and burnt them to ashes.

Whereas it is said, 'They shall see their corps;' the meaning is, that all the blind people within the Roman empire should be eye-witnesses of these things, and not only so, but even great agents also in the slaughter of God's people.

By 'three days and an half,' which is half a week, he meaneth all the time of Antichrist's reign, and tyrannical government, as before hath been shewed. For these three days and a half, being in prophetical computation three years and a half, signify the same things that the two and forty months, and a thousand two hundred and threescore days as before said.

'And they, that dwell upon the earth, shall rejoice over them and be glad, and shall send gifts one to another: for these

‘two prophets vexed them that dwelt on
‘the earth.’ Rev. xi. 10.

Here we see how the inhabitants of the earth, that is, the seduced multitude and blind people in the time of ignorance, do greatly insult and triumph over the death of the Lord’s witnesses; and they do express their joy by sending gifts and presents one to another, as if they had received some great benefits, or had heard the most joyful news in the world. And the reason is added, because they vexed and tormented them; meaning thereby, that the preaching of the truth, and the reproving of their errors, idolatries, and manifold impieties, was a dagger, and a corsay unto them, they could at no hand endure it, for the preaching of the gospel is the torment of the world, and the preachers the tormenters. These few preachers thundering against their superstitions and abominable service of Anti-christ, did vex every vein in their heart, and inwardly so wound and lance their consciences, that they could have no rest till they had rid them out of the world. But now having dispatched them, and made riddance of them, they are very crank and jocund.

‘But after three days and a half, the spirit of life coming from God, shall enter into them, and they shall stand upon their

• 'feet, and great fear shall come upon them which saw them.' Rev. xi. 11.

Notwithstanding the rage and savage fury of the Pope and his followers, yet here is shewed, that they could not prevail as they desired: for within three days and a half, that is, when the date of Antichrist's reign was expired, and the time come that Popery must be disclosed by the light of the gospel breaking forth, there followeth a great alteration: For these two prophets or witnesses are raised up again: For he faith, the Spirit of life which came from God, shall enter into them, and they shall stand upon their feet.

This may seem somewhat strange, but it is not to be understood, that they should be raised up bodily in their persons, till the last resurrection: but that God would raise up others endued with the same spirit, which should mightily defend both the doctrine, cause, and quarrel, which their predecessors had maintained, and sealed with their blood: in whom they should after a sort revive, and live again, even as Elias did revive, and as it were live again in John Baptist, who is said to be endued with the power and the spirit of Elias, as it was foretold by the prophet, and, as our Saviour himself doth avouch. Now blessed be God, that we live in these days, wherein

we see with our eyes all these things fulfilled. For when the Pope and his clergy had murdered Gerbardus, Dulcius, Narrensis, Waldus, Nicholaus Orem, John Picus, John Zisca, Visilus, Groningenfis, Armerias, Wickliffe, Husse, Jerome of Prague, and many preachers in Suevia, and one hundred holy Christians in the country of Alsatia, and many other countries, and of all conditions of men: yet for all that, spite of their hearts, God raised up others in their stead, as Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Peter Martyr, Peter Viret, Melancthon, Bucer, Bullinger, and their successors, yea the thousands of excellent ministers and preachers which are dispersed over all Europe at this day: in whom all the former witnesses do revive, and as it were stand upon their feet again. And now a great fear is come upon the Pope and his clergy, and all his favourites; for they did never so much as dream of such an alteration: but this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

‘ And they shall hear a great voice from him, saying unto them: Come up hither, and they shall ascend up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies shall see them.’ Rev. xi. 12.

Here the Lord’s witnesses, whom Anti-christ had murdered, are called, and taken

up into heaven, that they may be crowned with glory and immortality, having in the earth fought so excellent a fight of faith as they had: for even as Christ their head was taken up in a cloud to the heavens, even so his faithful members are here taken up in a cloud to reign with him for ever. Moreover, it is here said, that 'their enemies shall see them ascending up:' they shall as it were ascend up in their sight: for from the fire and faggot, swords and spears of their enemies, they went directly unto God, and the very consciences of their persecutors did witness so much; nay some of them being in horrible convulsions of conscience, did not stick to utter it, avouching the innocency of God's martyrs: as sometimes Pilate, and the Centurion did of Christ. But though they had not been justified by their enemies, yet are here justified by a great testimony: for the voice from heaven, the voice of God dath justify them, and clear them, accounting them worthy to be called up from the earth to heaven, and received to eternal glory. For whosoever the Pope and his clergy condemned them for heretics and schismatics: yet here they are justified and cleared by a voice from heaven, which is more than the voices, suffrages, and approbations of all men in the world.

‘ And the same hour there shall be a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city shall fall, and in the earthquake shall be slain in number seven thousand, and the remnant were sore feared, and gave glory to the God of heaven.’ Rev. ix. 13.

As he hath shewed before that the world was very joyful and jocund, when they had made dispatch of God’s witnesses: but afterward full of fear and terror, when they saw what followed: so here in this verse is shewed, that at the same hour, that is, about the same time when they haye persecuted the saints, and see thousands of others raised up in their stead, and as it were out of their blood, that there should immediately follow ‘ a great earthquake:’ that is, horrible commotions, seditions, tumults, and open wars among the kingdoms and nations of the world, and amongst all people which should live after the breaking forth of the light of the gospel; as this day we see with our eyes: for who now in these days doth not see and feel this earthquake? Who knoweth not what stirs there have been, and are every where about religion? Who is ignorant that all the wars, seditions, treacheries, treasons, and rebellions that are this day in Europe betwixt one kingdom and another, are especially concerning the matter of religion? But mark what

followeth: behold the effect of this earthquake; it is said, that ' the tenth part of ' the city shall fall.' By the city here he meaneth the great city of Rome, mentioned before, verse 8. which is therefore called the great city, because it was the chief city of the Roman empire, and the very seat of Antichrist. Now then, the sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost is, that when there once beginneth to be an earthquake, that is, broils, contentions, alterations, questions, and disputations about religion; and that the Popish doctrine, which had so long prevailed in the world, should be called in question; yea, openly preached against, convicted and condemned, that then Rome shall begin to fall, and Romish religion to suffer a great eclipse; yea, the tenth part, that is, some part of the city of Rome; I mean the doctrine and authority of Rome, shall be overthrown. Now this falling of the tenth part of Rome was fulfilled within some few years after the preaching of the gospel by Luther and his immediate successors; but since it is gone back many degrees, and hereafter it shall still ebb and consume away by degrees, even till it come to nothing: as God willing, shall be plainly proved hereafter.

Moreover, here is set down another effect of this earthquake; which is, that

thereby shall be slain in number seven thousand, that is, many thousands; for the number of seven is a perfect and universal number, as formerly hath been declared. But the sense of this clause is, that all such as will not yield to the gospel after matters once come in question, and the light thereof breaketh forth, but continue still in their blindness and hardness, standing out sturdily against the truth, shall feel the heavy judgment of God upon them, and come to miserable and wretched ends; as did here in England, Stephen Gardiner, bloody Bonner, and many other such open persecutors in other nations and countries, as the book of martyrs doth plentifully witness.

Last of all, it is said, ' that the rest were terrified, and gave glory to the God of heaven:' that is, the elect of God seeing these horrible judgments upon the persecutors of the gospel, and having their eyes opened thro' these contentions and broils about religion, should repent of their former idolatries; blindness and ignorance, should yield to the truth, and give glory to the God of heaven, as at this day we see thousands do, God be thanked. We heard before in the time of the Turks murdering army, when the third part of men were slain, that the rest repented not of their

idolatry. But now (God be praised for it) many do repent every day, and turn from dumb idols to serve the living God. And therefore although the times wherein we live be sinful and troublesome, yet are they golden times and days, in comparison of former ages, wherein Antichrist did reign and rule over all. Moreover, from this place may plainly and strongly be concluded, that the gospel shall prevail more and more in all the kingdoms of Europe, even until the end of the world. For here we see it foretold and prophesied, that in the very last age of the world, and even as it were a little before the blowing of the seventh trumpet, which presently hereupon is founded, as in the next verses appeareth, many should repent, and give glory to God.

‘ The second wo is past, and behold the third wo will come quickly. And the seventh angel blew the trumpet, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are our Lord’s, and his Christ’s, and he shall reign for evermore,’ Rev. xi. 14, 15.

Now cometh the third, the last, and the greatest wo, which is the wo of eternal death upon all the ungodly, both in their souls and bodies for ever in the last judgment. The second wo was Turkism: and

s third wo is the last judgment. For it w followeth, that the seventh angel blow-
the last trumpet; as our Lord Jesus are before, that when the seventh angel wuld blow the trumpet, there would be more time. Therefore when we see all ngs fulfilled which do belong unto the th trumpet, it remaineth that we should ety hour expect and look for the blowing the seventh trumpet and the end of the rld. For the Holy Ghost telleth us, that en the kingdom of the Pope and the rk shall fall, and the gospel be preached many nations and kingdoms, that then e third wo will come anon, that is, the t judgment followeth presently upon it. Now at the blowing of this seventh trum- t 'there were great voices in heaven, aying, The kingdoms of this world are our Lord's, and his Christ's, and he shall eign for evermore.'

These voices in heaven are triumphing ices of God's elect, who do exceedingly joice and triumph, that the kingdom of itan and Antichrist is overthrown, and at the kingdom of God and of Christ is t up, and shall stand for evermore. For now all adversary power being overthrown, Christ doth deliver up a peaceable king- m to his Father, as it is written, ' Then shall be the end, when he hath delivered

* up his peaceable kingdom to God the
‘ Father,’ 1 Cor. i. 15—24. For he must
reign over the church militant, till he have
trode down all his enemies under his feet;
and when the Son of God hath subdued all
things to himself, then shall he be subject to
his Father, as he is the Mediator of the
church, and yet reign with his church tri-
umphant for evermore.

‘ Then the four and twenty elders which
sat before God on their seats, fell upon
their faces, and worshipped God, saying,
‘ We give thee thanks, O Lord God Al-
mighty, which art, which wast, and which
art to come; for thou hast received thy
great might, and hast obtained thy king-
dom, Rev. xi. 16, 17.

These four and twenty elders do signify
all the elect, both of Jews and Gentiles, as
we have heard before; which all in most
suppliant manner do worship the only ever-
lasting God, even in the church triumph-
ant, and do greatly rejoice, and give all
praise and glory unto him, because now he
hath received the kingdom, the power, and
the glory, both Pope, and Turk, and em-
peror, and all his enemies being subdued
under his feet.

‘ And the Gentiles were angry, and thy
wrath is come, and the time of the dead,
that they should be judged, and that thou

‘ shouldest give reward unto thy servants
 ‘ the prophets, and to the saints, and to
 ‘ them that fear thy name, and to small
 ‘ and great, and shouldest destroy them
 ‘ which destroy the earth.’ Rev. xi. 18.

Now he mentioneth the wrath and vengeance which is to be poured forth upon all the wicked at the last day, and also the reward of the godly. For whereas he saith, ‘ The Gentiles were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged:’ the sense and meaning is, that all the profane enemies of the church, which had their time in which they were angry with God’s people, and in their wrath did afflict and vex them very sore, should now be judged and condemned in God’s wrath: for now the day of his wrath and vengeance is come, wherein he will destroy them that destroyed the earth, and seemed to carry all before them; and where also he will give a full recompence of reward to all his faithful worshippers, both small and great, both preachers and professors of his gospel.

‘ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in the temple the ark of his covenant, and there was lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and earthquakes, and much hail.’ Rev. xi. 19.

This is a further amplification of that which is set down in this former verse. For now he saith, that 'the temple of God should be opened in heaven:' that is, an open door and passage should be made through Christ, for all the elect to enter into God's everlasting kingdom, and reign with him and his angels for evermore. By 'the ark of the covenant,' is meant Christ, who is said here to be seen in the temple, or kingdom of glory, because through his mediation only (in whom the covenant of peace is established with his church), the twenty-four elders are made partakers of their crowns, and enter in with him and his angels into the everlasting temple made without hands, and eternal in the heavens. But on the contrary, here is said, that 'there were lightnings, thunderings,' &c. that is, most horrible vengeance and wrath poured down upon all reprobates in hell-fire for evermore. For when it shall be said to all the faithful, 'Come ye blessed,' &c. then also shall it be said unto all unbelievers, 'Go ye cursed into hell-fire,' &c.

Now for warrant of this exposition of the last verse, that the temple in heaven is to be understood of the kingdom of glory, look Rev. xv. 5, 6, 8.—xvi. 1. The reason hereof is, that as the doors of the temple of Jerusalem being set open, God's

people entered in and worshipped: so the everlasting gates of the new Jerufalem, and celestial temple being set open by Christ, all the elect do enter in and worship God without weariness, even as the angels, for evermore.

The ark of the covenant is taken for Christ, 2 Sam. vi. 2. Psal. lxxviii. 61, 62. This ark of the covenant, that is Christ, is here seen in the temple, because Christ hath already taken possession of heaven as mediator and head of the church, and now doth set open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, that through him they may have free access thereunto, as it is written, ‘that through him only we have an entrance unto the Father,’ Eph. ii. 28.

That by ‘thunderings and lightnings, earthquakes and hail,’ is meant that horrible vengeance and wrath which is poured forth upon all the ungodly, Psalm xi. 6.— Let this briefly suffice to satisfy the conscience of the reader. And thus much concerning the second vision contained in these eight chapters going before: wherein we have heard all things expounded that do belong unto the opening of the seven seals, and the blowing of the seven trumpets, that is, all notable things which were to fall out from the apostles times unto the end of the whole world.

C H A P. XII.

NOW having finished the second vision, we are come unto the third, contained in all the chapters following, even unto the end of this book. Wherein divers things which were obscurely and darkly set down in the former vision, are more plainly opened and expounded: so that this third vision is as it were a commentary or more clear exposition of sundry things contained in the second vision. But especially of the persecuting Roman empire mentioned in the opening of the second seal, and also of the Papacy mentioned at the blowing of the first trumpet. But the general sum of this third vision is a lively pointing out of the malignant church, and the great upholders thereof, the devil, the Roman emperor and the Pope. It sheweth also the rising and falling of the Roman empire; the rising and falling of Papacy. It sheweth also the utter overthrow of both together, with the eternal condemnation of the devil which set them all a-work to fight against the church. Last of all, it sheweth the eternal felicity of the church, and the inconceivable happiness of all God's chosen in the heavens for evermore. The principle aim of this twelfth chapter is to set forth the nature of the true, visible, and mili-

tant church here on earth, whose head is Christ Jesus; and also the false malignant church, whose head is the devil; together with the continual enmity and war which is always betwixt them.

This chapter may very fitly be divided into five parts:

First, A description of the church.

Secondly, A description of the devil, the church's enemy.

Thirdly, Containing the church's battle with the devil, and her victory.

Fourthly, Shewing the joy and triumphs of the godly in the church's victory over Satan.

Fifthly, Shewing the fury and malice of Satan, who, although he was foiled in battle by the church, yet would not give over, but continued persecuting the church in her members, and making war against the remnant of her seed.

‘And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.’

Rev. xii. 1.

First, The Holy Ghost calleth the matters of this chapter a great wonder, to stir us up to attention; for men are much moved with wonders: and a wonder indeed it is in the literal sense, to see a woman

clothed with the sun, &c. but a far greater wonder in the spiritual sense, as we shall hear; and the greatest wonder of all, that a poor weak woman should encounter with a great red dragon and overcome him. It is to be a wonder in heaven, because the church here in vision appeareth not upon the earth, but in heaven, in as much as her birth is from heaven, her inheritance in heaven, and her conversation in heaven.

The church is here compared to a woman, as in Psalm xlv. and in the whole of the Song of Solomon, and that for three reasons.

First, As a woman is weak and feeble, and in law can do nothing of herself without her husband; so we of ourselves are weak and feeble, and in matters of God's law and worship, can do nothing without our husband Christ, as he saith, 'Without me ye can nothing.'

Secondly, As a woman through the company of her husband is fruitful, and bringeth forth children: so the church by her conjunction with Christ and his word, doth bring forth many children unto God.

Thirdly, As the love and affection of a woman is to her husband, as Genesis ii. 16. so the love and affection of the church is altogether to Christ, and Christ to her.

This woman is clothed with the sun:

that is, the church is clothed with Christ 'the sun of righteousness,' Mal. iv. 2. as the prophet speaketh.

'The moon was under her feet.' Whereby is meant, that the church treadeth under her feet all worldly things, which are compared to the moon for their often changes, waxings, wainings, and increasings, decreasings, continual mutations, and uncertainties. The church treadeth all transitory things under her feet: that is, she maketh light account of them, she regardeth them not in comparison of heavenly things: for he that is clothed with the sun, careth little for the light of the moon.

'She hath upon her head a crown of twelve stars:' which signifieth that the church is adorned and beautified with the doctrine of the twelve apostles; that is, the doctrine of the gospel, as it were with a crown of gold, of pearl, and precious stones. For the doctrine of the gospel is the crown of the church.

'And she was with child, and cried travailing in birth, and was pained ready to be delivered.' Rev. xii. 2.

The church is said to be with child after she hath conceived the immortal seed of the word by the ministry of the gospel, as the apostle saith: 'In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel:' 2 Cor iv. 15.

And to the Galatians, ' O ye little children,
' of whom I travail in birth again till Christ
' be formed in you.'

It is not only said, that this woman was with child; but also, that she was very near her time, ready to bring forth, and to be delivered, and that she crieth in travail. Now the child which she bringeth forth is Christ Jesus, as appeareth in the fifth verse, for there it is said of him, that ' he should rule all nations with a rod of iron,' Gal. v. 19.

Now although Christ was born but of one member of the church, which is the Virgin Mary: yet may it be said, that the whole church, which was before his coming, did even travail with pain to bring him forth, because they had, through faith in the promises, a longing and fervent desire and expectation of his coming. For from the first promise made to Adam, and afterward renewed to Abraham and his posterity, the church stood in a continual expectation of the promised Messiah, looking earnestly every day when he should be actually exhibited to the world. For which cause here she is said ' to cry, travailing in birth.' And not unfitly also may the church be said to cry travailing in birth, when, through many persecutions and afflictions, she bringeth forth children unto God by the ministry

of the word. For the church bringeth forth no children at ease, but with hard travail, and much ado, having so few friends to help her, and so many enemies against her, as after we shall hear.

‘ And there appeared another wonder in heaven: For behold a great red dragon having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered,’ Rev. xii. 3, 4.

Now we are come to the description of the church’s great and capital enemy, which is the devil: who, because he studieth and laboureth continually to impeach the good state of the church in heavenly things, to deject her from her dignity, and dispossess her of her inheritance, therefore here in a vision he is said to appear in heaven: for he meddleth with the church in and about heavenly things, practising to pull her out of heaven, from whence she came, and whither she must return, even to cast her into hell and condemnation with himself, if it were possible. The devil is compared to a dragon, for his fury and cunning; to a dragon, for his power and might; and a red dragon, for his bloody cruelty,

malice, and madness against Christ and all his members.

His 'seven heads' signify his manifold flights and subtilties, wherein he is a craftsman.

His 'ten horns' signify his dreadful power. For he knoweth not that he is stronger than any other creature, having not lost his strength by his fall, but remaineth as strong as an angel of light.

His 'seven crowns upon his heads' do signify his manifold victories over the world. For he hath from time to time, and from age to age got so many conquests over the world through his flight and power, that now 'he is the god of the world,' as the apostle saith, 'and reigneth as king over them.'

The dragon hath a monstrous tail both for length and strength; for it is so long that it reacheth up to heaven, and so strong, that it brusheth down many stars thence. That is, the devil through abomination and covetousness, and other fleshly lusts, doth pull down many ministers, which shined in doctrine and life as the stars of heaven, even unto the earth, where they have lost their brightness and glory, and shine as much as the moon in a mist.

Moreover, it is said, 'that the dragon stood before the woman in travail, to de-

‘ vour her child as sooon as it was born,’
 Rev. xii. 4. Wherein we are to observe
 the malice and fury of Satan, in that he
 watcheth so narrowly to devour the blessed
 seed, even the Saviour of the world, so
 soon as he was born. And for this cause
 he stirred up Herod the king subtilely to seek
 him out by the wise men, that he might kill
 him: and afterward most cruelly practised
 the same, by murdering so many innocents.
 But this is always a general truth, that Sa-
 tan seeketh to smother not only Christ, but
 every member of his in the cradle; yea, to
 blast them in the bud, before ever they
 come to fruit or flower.

‘ So she brought forth a man-child, which
 should rule all nations with a rod of iron,
 and that her child was taken up to God
 and his throne,’ Rev. xii. 5.

Notwithstanding the malice and watch-
 fulness of Satan, yet the church bringeth
 forth Christ, which should rule and over-
 rule all nations with a rod of iron; that is,
 the sceptre of his word, as it is in Psalm ii.
 and with the rod of his mouth, as the pro-
 phet speaketh.

Moreover it is said, that this ‘ child was
 taken up unto God and his throne.’ That
 is, Christ by his resurrection did take pos-
 session of his chair of state in despite of
 Herod, Pontius Pilate, the priests, the pha-

pharisees, and all other his enemies, which sought to keep him down: and now he being ascended unto heaven, doth draw all his members unto him, in spite of the devil and all his imps.

‘ And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days,’ Rev. xii. 6.

Now after the woman’s child was set in safety, here is shewed what became of the woman herself: to wit, that she was so sore pursued by the scribes and pharisees, and by the priests and elders, that she was glad to fly into the wilderness. The natural sense and meaning of this place is, that when the church began to grow after Christ’s ascension, and the number of the disciples to increase exceedingly, as we read in the second of the Acts, Satan did so greatly malign it, and began to be in such a rage, that he would have eaten them up all at a bite, and rooted them out at once, that so the woman might have no more being in the earth. And therefore we read Acts viii. that after the stoning of Stephen, there was such a persecution raised up against the church by the high-priests, the princes of the Jews, the pharisees, and all that vile crew, that all the apostles and disciples of

of Christ were scattered and dispersed here and there in the heathen countries, and amongst the heathen people, which here are called the wilderness, that is to say, ground untilled, desolate and barren of all fruits of godliness.

But now may some man say, How shall the church do in the wilderness? How shall she live? How shall she be sustained? There is no tilling, no sowing, no planting, there groweth no corn, there is nothing to be had either for food or raiment. Here it is answered, that God prepared a place for her, where she should be fed; God took up an inn for her: she wanted neither food nor raiment in her persecutions and troubles. Which teacheth, that God doth always provide for his own, even in great miseries, scarcities, famines, banishments and persecutions; as sometimes he did for Elias in the time of dearth, and for the children of Israel in the wilderness.

The time wherein the church was fed in the wilderness, was, 'a thousand two hundred and threescore days:' that is, during the time of her persecutions, as before hath been shewed, Rev. xi. ii.

' And there was a battle in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought.' Rev. xii. 7.

‘ But they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.’
Rev. xii. 8.

Now we are come to the third part of this chapter, which is the battle betwixt Christ and the devil. For whereas the dragon could not smother Christ in the cradle, as he endeavoured, and so deprive the church of all her happiness for ever; now he proclaimeth open war, both against Christ and all his members, plotting and purposing to root out the very salvation of the church, though it be founded in Christ. Wherein he sheweth both his impudence and furious madness. Michael here signifieth Christ, as in Daniel x. 13. This name is given to Christ in Daniel, because he is the first of the chief Princes; that is, he is the head of the angels, who are chief princes, as the apostle affirmeth.

That Christ hath his angels joined with him, is not to note any weakness or want of strength in Christ alone to overcome his enemies, but to shew, that as Christ effecteth great wonders in the world; so for the most part he doth it by instruments and means; as sometimes angels, sometimes men. But here specially it meaneth the apostles, and their successors; yea, and at this day all Christian kings, princes, and potentates of the earth, and all others, which take part

with Christ against the devil and his instruments.

Well, here we see that these two generals and grand captains, Michael and the dragon, do muster both their armies, join battle, and fight a pitched battle, the event and success whereof is this, that the dragon and his angels go down. O blessed success may we say! For if the devil had prevailed, it had been wo to us: since this battle was about and concerning the very salvation of mankind by Christ's death and resurrection. We know how the devil set upon Christ alone to tempt him unto sin, that so he might overthrow the work of our redemption, supposing in this combat for to have got the day: but he prevailed not. Afterward, how strongly did he oppose him by his angels; I mean, the scribes and pharisees, the high-priests and elders of the people; yea, all the devils in hell, and his whole infernal army, not only in murdering and crucifying his natural body, but also in using all forcible and cunning means to keep him down, that he might never rise up again; as the great stone upon his tomb, the sealing of it, the watch set to keep it! For the devil knew right well, that if Christ rose again, he should lose the field: for the resurrection of Christ is our actual justification, ' And Christ was mightily declared

‘ to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.’ Well, do the dragon and his angels what they can, yet Christ is risen again, and hath spoiled principalities and powers; yea, all the infernal army, and hath made a shew of them openly, and hath led them all in triumph upon his cross: so that we see in this first and greatest battle, the devil hath the foil. And it is further said, ‘ that this devil and his angels were cast out of heaven, and their place was no more found:’ which is not to be understood of their first casting out of heaven immediately after their creation; for at that time they were not devils, nor enemies to the church, but angels of light; but now since their fall, and since they were devils, they are said to be cast out of heaven, not because they ever came into heaven since they were devils, but because they can no longer impeach the church touching her blessed state in heaven. They are without all hope to dispossess her of her inheritance; for that is ratified and made sure unto her in the death and resurrection of Christ. And for this cause it is said, that the devil hath no more to do in heaven; that is, he cannot for his heart overthrow the salvation of God’s children. ‘ For who can lay any thing to the charge of God’s chosen? ‘ It is God that justifieth, who shall con-

‘ demn? It is Christ which is dead, yea, or ‘ rather, which is risen again,’ &c. Rom. viii. 33. True it is indeed, that this battle is said to be in heaven, that is, about heavenly things; yea, about the highest points of heaven, which is salvation or damnation: for the devil upon this very point hath from the beginning mightily wrestled and struggled with the church, and even until this day: but blessed be God that he cannot, nor shall not prevail against any one of God’s elect. For our Lord Jefus faith, ‘ I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any take them out of my hand: my Father which gave them me is greater than all. Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. Again, all that the Father giveth me shall come unto me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.’ John x. 28.

Now further we are to observe, that as Christ in his own person hath once prevailed in the main battle against the devil, so his church militant shall likewise always prevail through him: for it is written, ‘ the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ Mat. xvi. 18.

‘ And the great dragon, that old serpent

‘ called the devil and Satan was cast out,
‘ which deceived all the world: he was
‘ even cast into the earth, and his angels
‘ were cast out with him.’ Rev. xi. 9.

Now, because the devil cannot overthrow the salvation of God’s elect, he is said to ‘ be cast out of heaven into the earth:’ that is, amongst earthly and carnal men, that he may exercise his tyranny, and wreak his malice upon them. For he hath power given him to tyrannize over them at his pleasure, and the apostle saith, ‘ he worketh ‘ in the children of disobedience, and taketh ‘ them captive to do his will.’ Ephes. ii. 2.

‘ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven,
‘ saying, now is salvation, and strength, and
‘ the kingdom of our God, and the power
‘ of his Christ, for the accuser of our bre-
‘ thren is cast down, which accused them
‘ before God day and night.’ Rev. xi. 10.

Here is the triumphant song of victory, which all the saints and angels do sing unto God, praising and magnifying his power, and the power of his Son Christ, for overcoming the dragon, and giving the victory to the church through Christ. For now with great joy and loud voices they sing and say, that the church’s salvation is sealed and made sure unto her for ever. It can never be shaken. The devil is foiled and cast down into the earth.

These songs of joy after great victories are of great antiquity in the church: as we read of the children of Israel after the overthrow of Pharaoh and his army in the red sea; of Deborah, after the great victory over Sisera; of the women that sung after the victory over Goliah by David.

The devil is called the accuser of the brethren for two causes: *First*, Because he accuseth God's elect of much sin, and calleth for justice against them day and night at God's hand, that they might be condemned upon such articles as he is able to prove against them: for he knowing right well that the Judge of all the world is a just God, and must needs deal uprightly, doth daily urge him to do justice unto sinners, being willingly ignorant that all God's people, though sinners, are cleared and discharged in Christ.

Another reafer is, because of the calumnias, reproaches and flanders which in all ages, at all times, and in all places and countries he hath always unjustly raised up against the true worshippers of God.

‘ But they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.’ Rev. xi. 11.

Here is shewed, that the church's victory over Satan and hell is not through any

power or might of her own, but by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of the testimony; that is, the word of God, which they witness, profess, love, and adhere to even unto death.

‘Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them; wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you which hath great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time,’ Rev. xii. 12.

Here again the saints and angels, and all the blessed company of heaven are called upon, and exhorted to rejoice, because the devil and his angels are cast out, and the elect have the victory over him through the blood of the Lamb; and because the salvation of the church is sealed up, and God only reigneth through Christ. Which are all matters of so great moment, that not only the church militant is stirred up to rejoice herein, but even the church triumphant also, that is, the spirits of just and perfect men. But on the contrary, here is fearful wo denounced against the ‘inhabitants of the earth, and the sea;’ that is, all Papists, Atheists, worldlings, and reprobates. For since he cannot have his will of the church, yet he will have his will, and wreak his malice upon them, by hardening their hearts, and blinding their

eyes, and making them his slaves and vassals, to fight for his kingdom against Christ; against his church, against all goodness, and all good men. Therefore is added, why the devil is in such a rage with the world, and cometh upon them in so great wrath and fury; to wit, because ' he hath but a short time:' that is, because his kingdom draweth to an end, therefore he doth so bestir himself.

' And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which had brought forth the man-child,' Rev. xii. 13.

Now the devil seeing himself cast out of heaven, so as he cannot impeach the salvation of the church, he raiseth up horrible persecutions against her by his instruments here in the earth, labouring to root her out if it were possible: for being overcome of the head, he doth now with might and main set upon the body, and what horrible storms he hath in all ages, specially in these last days, raised up, and daily doth raise up against the church, both the scriptures and all church history do abundantly declare.

' But to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and

‘ and half a time, from the presence of the serpent,’ Rev. xii. 14.

These two wings do signify all the ways and means of evasion which God gave to his church, when he delivered her from the hands of her pursuers and persecutors: and also her swift flight from them and all their malicious practices. For although the church cannot absolutely fly from the presence of the devil with her eagles wings, being so unspeakably swift as he is; yet after a sort she is said to fly from him and his presence, when the power of the tyrants and persecutors which he raised up, cannot overtake her, to murder and kill her. But as touching her flight to the wilderness, and her lodging and nourishment there by God’s providence, in the midst of all penury and extremity, we have sufficiently heard before in the sixth verse, and therefore here I cease to speak any further of it. As concerning the space and continuance of her nourishment in the wilderness, which is here set down to ‘ be a time, and times, and half a time;’ it is the same with the thousand two hundred and threescore days mentioned in the sixth verse; and the twenty-four months mentioned Rev. xi. 2. and the three days and an half, mentioned Rev. xi. 6. as before hath been shewed.

‘ And the serpent cast out of his mouth

‘water after the woman like a flood that he
‘might cause her to be carried away of the
‘flood,’ Rev. xii. 15.

Now the church being secretly hid, and nourished by God’s providence in the wilderness, so as the devil and his instruments cannot find her out or come at her, he taketh another course, and casteth about another way to annoy her; and that is, by casting a flood of water after her to drown her withal: whereby is meant the innumerable lies, reproaches and slanders, which he raised up by several heretics against her in all ages; as the Arians, Donatists, Papists, and such like, and all to bring her into the hatred of princes, potentates, and all that were in love with her, that since otherwise he could not prevail against her yet at least he might utterly sink her in this gulf of reproaches.

‘But the earth helped the woman, and
‘the earth opened her mouth, and swallow-
‘ed up the flood which the dragon had
‘cast out of his mouth,’ Rev. xii. 16.

The same God which first delivered the church from the violence and fury of Satan and afterwards cast him out of heaven, and gave her victory over him; and after that again miraculously hid her, and preserved her in the wilderness, doth not now at a dead lift forsake her, nor suffer her to be

drowned in this flood of reproaches, and unjust calumniations, which the dragon cast up after her; but causeth the ' earth to help her, and to swallow up the flood:' that is, he useth all creatures in the earth to help his church: and not only so, but also he stirreth up many earthly and carnal men to defend the church, and to take part with her against her enemies, as sometimes he did Cyrus, Ebedmelech, Nebuzaradan, Gamaliel, and sundry others, whose power and policy he used for the good of his church, and for the drying up of that flood of reproaches, which Satan hath in all ages cast up against her. And, God be thanked, we see at this day, that this flood of slanders and calumnies, which Papists and Atheists cast out against the church and her particular members, do dry up daily, and shall dry up more and more, being drunk in by the earth. And the church doth stand still unmoveable, and shall stand and continue even unto the end of the world.

* Then the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went and made war with the remnant of her seed, which kept the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,' Rev. xii. 17.

Here we see there is no end of the devil's malice; he is indefatigable in mischief; tho' he have never so many foils, yet he will ne-

ver give over, but begin again. For whereas he could not prevail against the woman, to cast her out of heaven by impeaching her election and salvation in Christ, nor yet root her out of the earth by persecutions, being hid in the wilderness and locked up in the privy chamber of God's providence, as sometimes young Joash was locked up in the priest's chamber from the fury of Athalia: now he goeth another way to work, and setteth upon her in her seed and posterity, which remain in the earth unto this day. So that now, since he cannot do what mischief he would against the church, yet will he do what he can: seeing he cannot wound her in her head, yet will he bite and pinch at her heel, as it is written, 'that he should bruise her heel,' Gen. iii. 17. And as the malice of Satan is against the church; so is the rage and fury of all his members, even all the wicked and ungodly, against the true worshippers of God. They are restless in malice and mischief: if they cannot vex them one way, they will try another: if they cannot touch them in their lives, yet will they molest them in their goods and good name: if they cannot do what they would, yet will they do what they can: they will never give over: if they can spite them in the least thing that is, they shall be sure of it. For they

are as full of venom as a toad, and as full of malice to Christ as an egg is full of meat.

‘ And I stood on the sea sand,’ Rev. xii. 18.

Now John affirmeth that he stood upon the sea sand to behold the beast which riseth out of the sea in the next chapter, or else because the Greek word (*estaththus*) may be of the third person, which is, he stood; that is, the dragon stood; it may bear that sense, that the devil stood upon the sea sand, as it were working and framing out of the sea his chief instrument, which is the beast now following to be spoken of.

C H A P. XIII.

WE have heard in the former chapter the description of the church, and of her arch-enemy the devil, and of the battle betwixt them, with the success thereof. Now in this chapter we are to hear of the dragons two great instruments, whereby he fighteth against the woman, that is, the Roman empire, and the Papacy. For by these two, as it were his two hands, he hath in all ages, from the apostles time to

this day, most cruelly assailed and afflicted the church. Therefore the main design of this chapter is to describe at large these two beasts, together with all their beastly proceedings. So that this chapter may fitly be divided into two principal parts.

First, A description of the Roman monarchy, when it was at the highest pitch, unto the eleventh verse.

Secondly, A description of the Papacy, when it was in his pride and exaltation, in all the verses following unto the end of this chapter.

In the first of these two main branches the Roman empire is diversely described:

First, The pedigree thereof.

Secondly, Of her seven several governments.

Thirdly, Of her great and out-stretched power.

Fourthly, Of her victories.

Fifthly, Of her blasphemies.

Sixtly, Of her fury, rapine, and pride.

After this is set down the wound which was made in the empire, with the curing of the same.

Lastly, Is set down the great and admirable power and authority of the Roman empire, which ruled over a great part of the world, and had many nations subject unto it, especially when the Popes were the heads thereof.

In the second main part is Papacy very lively described.

First, From the pedigree thereof, which is of the earth.

Secondly, From the civil and ecclesiastical power thereof, which is pretended to come from Christ, although in truth it is of the devil.

After this is set down, that the Papacy should be as mighty, and perform as much in the service of the dragon, against God, as ever the empire of the Heathen could do, both by authority, and force; and especially by lying wonders.

Then it is shewed that as the Papacy did in substance of matter set up, and restore again the old Roman tyranny to be worshipped and wondered at; so hath it framed an hierarchy or ecclesiastical government, after the very form and presidence of the ancient Roman tyranny; which is indeed so like it, that it is called the lively image thereof: and he hath by his clergy and their jurisdiction, put such life and spirit into this image, that it spake with authority and power in all countries and kingdoms; in so much, that whosoever would not submit himself thereunto, and both profess and practise Popery, and yield himself wholly to the Papacy, he should die for it.

Last of all, is described and discovered

from the numerative letters of the name of the second beast, both who he was, and from whence he shall spring.

‘ And I saw a beast rise out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns were ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy,’ Rev. xiii. 1.

First, We are to understand that a beast in the scripture doth signify a kingdom, or monarchy; and that not in respect of the civil power thereof, which is of God, as it is written, ‘ there is no power but of God,’ Rom. xiii. 1. but in respect of the tyranny, cruelty, ambition, pride, and other such like beastly qualities thereof, which are of the devil: and therefore this beast is said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, Rev. xvii. 8.

This word beast is thus taken in the seventh of Daniel, where the three great monarchies of the Babylonians, Medes and Persians, and of the Grecians, are compared for their pride, rapine and cruelty, to a lion, a bear, and a leopard, Dan: vii. 17. The angel in that chapter faith expressly, that these beasts were kings, that is, kingly governments or dominions.

By the beast in this place is meant the Roman monarchy, not in regard of the civil power thereof, but especially in re-

spect of the tyranny of it, in oppressing the church.

By the sea here is meant the troublesome state of the nations; as it is taken, Rev. iv. 6. and chap. ii. i. For from the boiling and broiling estate of the former kingdoms and heathen nations, which were as a raging sea, did the Roman empire spring up, as all histories do witness. And the prophet Daniel doth plainly teach, that through the division of the Greek empire, which fell out in the successors of Alexander the Great, especially betwixt his two captains Ptolomeus and Seleucus, this Roman monarchy by degrees made a head, till at last it came to this pitch, which now we shall hear of, Dan. x. 11.

By the seven heads of this beast, are the seven several governments of the Roman empire. *1st*, By Kings. *2dly*, By Consuls. *3dly*, By Decemviri. *4thly*, By Dictators. *5thly*, By Triumviri. *6thly*, By Emperors. And *Lastly*, by Popes, as hereafter shall more plainly appear, Rev. xvii. 9.

By the ten horns of this beast is meant the great power and large dominion of the Roman empire; or, as the angel himself doth expound it, thereby is meant ten kings, that is, many kingdoms which should be subject to the Roman monarchy, and where-

in very deed the power and strength of the empire did consist. For by these horns the Roman empire did not only push down other nations: but especially does against the church, and as it were cruelly gore the sides thereof, Rev. xvii. 1.

Now then we see that the Roman emperors, both in horns and heads, were like their father the devil, or the dragon.

By the ten crowns upon his ten horns, are meant his great and manifold victories over other countries and kingdoms.

The horns of the beast are said to be crowned, and not his heads, because the Roman empire hath always more prevailed by power than by policy, by strength than by subtilty. But the dragon hath his heads crowned, and not his horns, because he hath always done more hurt by policy, than power; by subtilty, than strength. One thing in all this greatly to be minded is, that the Holy Ghost in this chapter doth specially speak of the Roman monarchy, as the Popes were heads thereof; or as it was under the dominion of the Popes in their pride, when as the emperors were almost trodden under foot; and not simply and solely as the emperors were heads thereof.

Moreover, it is said, 'that upon the seven heads of this beast was written the

‘name of blasphemy.’ For, besides the blasphemies of Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Dioclesian, Julianus, and the other old heathenish and persecuting emperors, which have arrogated unto themselves divine honour, we shall afterwards hear of the surpassing blasphemies of the Popes against God and all goodness, Rev. xiii. 4, 5.

‘And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet like a bears, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion, and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority,’ Rev. xiii. 2.

Here the Roman empire is described of the likelihood of qualities which it had with the other three empires going before it. For first, it is compared to a leopard for swiftness to prey upon others; and also for fierceness and subtlety, as did the Greek monarchy.

Secondly, It is compared to a bear for rapine and ravening, as the monarchy of the Medes and Persians.

Thirdly, It is compared to a lion for pride and insolence, as the monarchy of the Chaldeans. So then, by this description it is very clear, that this beast signifieth the Roman monarchy, because it containeth in it the whole power of the three other empires: and is here described as a compound of divers beasts, yea, as a very mon-

ster of monsters, having the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion.

Moreover, it is said 'that the dragon gave his power, and his throne, and great authority,' Rev. xvii. 8. Which plainly sheweth, that the power and authority of the Roman empire is of the devil, in respect of the evil quality thereof; that is, fraud, rapine, and oppression. In which respect it is said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, as was declared before. But the substance of it, and the government itself was of God. 'For the powers that be are ordained of God,' Rom. xiii. 2.

'And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded unto death: but his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered, and followed the beast,' Rev. xiii. 3.

Here John, in a vision, seeth one of the seven heads of the beast almost wounded unto death. There be divers and differing opinions of the learned touching this wound of the empire, both when it should be, and how, and by whom. Some understand it of the death of Julius Cæsar; some of Nero; some of the oppression of the Goths and Vandals; some of the great prevailing of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, in the greatest part of Bohemia.

But to let all these pass, if we do wisely consider and weigh with ourselves, that by a beast in this place, is not meant any lawful administration of government, but a tyrannical power in persecuting the church, we shall find that a head of the beast was then wounded, when Constantine the Great slew Maxentius and Licinius the two last persecuting emperors, set up true religion, and brought peace to the churches. For hereby the Roman empire was greatly wounded, as touching the tyranny of it. The Holy Ghost doth not set down which of the seven heads were thus wounded, but in general, faith one of them. Now it is very probable that he meaneth the sixth head: For we do not read of any such wound in the former five which were past. Neither can it be understood of the seventh head, which was the Papacy, because it received no such wound as yet. It followeth then, that the wound was in the sixth head; that is, in the empire. But we read of no emperor that did so wound the beast, as did Constantine the Great. And therefore it is very probable, nay, a hundred to one, that the Holy Ghost here pointeth at him.

But it followeth, that this deadly wound was healed, to wit, by these wicked emperors which succeeded Constantine, as Con-

stantius, Julianus, Valentius, and others, which afresh did set up idolatry, and persecuted the church. Now upon the healing of this wound, it is said, that all the world wondered, and followed the beast; that is, many nations, or the greatest part of the world, did submit themselves to the Roman tyranny. For sure it is, some kingdoms were never subject to the empire of Rome, as some part of Asia, and some part of Africa.

‘ And they worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to war with him?’

Rev. xiii. 4.

Now is shewed how all the subjects of the Roman empire did worship the dragon: that is, they maintained that worship which he liked and loved; that is, the worship of idols; which the apostle calleth ‘ the worship of devils,’ 1 Cor. x. 20, 21. And it is said also, ‘ they worshipped the beast:’ that is, they did all with one accord submit themselves both to the religion and authority of the beast; that is, to the Popes, as they were the seventh head of the empire: for, as I said before, so I say again, the Holy Ghost here speaketh of the empire, when it was in the greatest glory and exaltation; yea, when all the world won-

dered and followed the beast; yea, when all admired the great and large dominion of the Roman empire, and said within themselves, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? Now the empire of Rome was never so great and powerful, as when the Popes were heads thereof; I mean, when they executed the whole civil jurisdiction of the empire, besides their ecclesiastical power, which now did both meet in one. For now the Papacy was aloft, and the Roman empire joined with it: so that the eyes of the world were dazzled with the pomp and magnificence thereof, and they said, What is like unto it? Or who is comparable to the Pope, the seventh head thereof? For then the blind world thought that the power of the Pope was not only above all things in this world but also did reach even to heaven and hell. For they imagined that the Pope might carry to heaven whom he would, and whom he would he might cast down to hell: And therefore who could war with the beast? And thus we see the reason of their wonder and of their speech. All histories, and experience itself do shew, that there was never any world so wondered at, as the usurped power and majesty of the Pope, after he came to be the head of the Roman monarchy. For then the world supposed that

he had the power even as God: and that he might depose and set up kings and emperors at his pleasure. Then it is clear, that under the dominion of the Popes, Rome hath been in her highest exaltation and glory: For the Papacy was the seventh head of the beast, whereby the whore of Babylon was supported in her most magnifical pomp and pride.

‘ And there was given unto him a mouth
‘ that spake great things and blasphemies,
‘ and power was given unto him to con-
‘ tinue forty and two month’s. And he
‘ opened his mouth unto blasphemy against
‘ God, to blaspheme his name, and his
‘ tabernacle, and them that dwell in hea-
‘ ven,’ Rev. xiii, 5, 6.

Here are set down the proud and blasphemous speeches both of the old and new Roman empire, and of the old and new Roman emperors. For this beast (as I said before) comprehendeth all the Roman empire, both under the heathen emperors and the Popes. Touching the great things and blasphemies which the old persecuting emperors have belched out against the God of heaven, it would require a volume to set them down in particulars: I will therefore only mention two or three for examples sake: As first, that of Caius Caligula, which would have his image set up in temples to

be worshipped as God, and that the people should swear by his name. Nero also did openly blaspheme the name of Christ, and required divine honour to be given unto him. Domitian commanded that he should be called God and Lord. Many others required the like things: and so all the world wondered and worshipped this blasphemous beast. Now as the sixth head, which was the old empire of Rome, was full of the names of blasphemy; so the seventh head, which is the new empire under the dominion of the Popes, which he here chiefly speaketh of, did most of all blaspheme. For the Pope did challenge to himself all power both in heaven and earth: he would be worshipped as God; he usurped authority over the word of God; he did take upon him to forgive sins; he did most blasphemously encroach upon all the offices of Christ, as King, Priest, and Prophet; he hath commanded the angels; he hath erected blasphemous images, and caused pictures to be made of the Godhead; he boasteth and cracketh great things of his papal power, of Peter's keys, of Peter's chair, of Peter's succession, of his miracles, of his two swords, and of his manifold prerogatives royal. One of the Popes poisoned his god; another cast his god into the fire; another would eat his peacock in de-

spite of God. Some of them counted the religion of Christ a tale or fable; some drank to the devil; some said they could do as much as God. It were infinite to set down all their blasphemies: for it is said of the whore of 'Babylon that she was full of 'the names of blasphemy.' Let this suffice for the understanding of this text, that as the old heathenish emperors did blaspheme, so the Popes, being heads of the empire, did most of all blaspheme. And as it is here said, they did not only blaspheme the name of God, but also did open their black and blasphemous mouths against his tabernacle; that is, his church, calling it a company of hereticks, schismaticks, apostates; and such like; 'and also against them that dwell in heaven;' that is, the spirits of just and perfect men which are in heaven, as Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and such like.

Moreover, it is to be noted, that this mouth was given unto this monstrous beast, thus to blaspheme and speak great things. But this is to be understood, that it was given in the wrath and just judgment of God upon the world, to plague them with all, because they regarded not the knowledge of the truth. But it is added, that this power of the beast thus to work his actions was limited to forty-two months; so

that although he rule and rage for a time, yet shall be not long continue.

‘And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given unto him over every kindred, and tongue, and nation. Therefore all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb which was slain from the beginning of the world,’ Rev. xiii. 7, 8.

These two verses do set forth the great power which was given to this beast, both in fighting against God’s people, and also overcoming of them, and murdering of them by heaps. As we read of thousands murdered in the first ten persecutions, and ten thousands by the Popes, since they came to exercise the civil authority and jurisdiction of the Roman empire, and that in all countries and kingdoms of Europe; as it is here said, that ‘power was given unto him over every kindred, and tongue, and nation.’ And it is added, that ‘all that dwell upon the earth,’ that is, all the subjects of the Roman monarchy, shall worship the beast, and make a god of him; as we read they have done. And the chief motive thereof was his blasphemous mouth, boasting and threatening great things if any did withstand him; and also his

mighty power and authority, whereby he bore down all before him. For if any did mutiny against him, he was sure to smart for it. And thus through his tyrannical power he subdued all nations under him, and made them stoop, and fall down and worship him. But it followeth, that for all this, none of God's elect did worship him, or submit themselves to his religion and authority, but only those that 'dwell upon the earth;' that is, earthly men; as Papists, Atheists, and reprobates, and all such 'whose names are not written in the book of life.' Christ is called the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, because the saving power of his death was from the beginning of all believers, although he was not actually exhibited until the fulness of time.

' If any man have an ear let him hear.
 ' If any lead into captivity, he shall go into captivity; if any kill with a sword, he must be killed by a sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints,' Rev. ix. 10.

Here is shewed, that the things spoken of this great beast are very secret and mystical, and can be understood of none but those only whose ears and eyes God openeth to hear and see, and understand, that is, the very elect of God: as for all Papists,

and worldlings, their ears and eyes are sealed and shut up, they cannot understand them, but do still worship the beast, ascribing unto him divine power and honour.

In the tenth verse the judgment and vengeance of God is denounced against the Roman monarchy, both former and latter; which as it hath long oppressed the church with cruel bondage, and drawn thousands into perpetual captivity; so itself also should be cast down, with all the adherents thereof; both in this life, and that which is to come. For as the Roman empire did tyrannize over the world, and led millions into spiritual captivity and bondage: so here it is avouched, that according to the just law of quittance, it should be brought to the same state. And as this beast had murdered many by the sword, so he himself must be murdered by the sword also; as the apostle saith, 'God is just, and therefore will recompence tribulation to them that trouble his church.' 2 Thes. i. 6. Now all this seemeth unto me to be a clear prophecy of the fall and final destruction of the Roman empire, which indeed, considering the pitch that it was at, may seem a thing strange and incredible: and therefore the Holy Ghost stirreth us up to attention in the ninth verse, as to a thing of great importance and admiration: for if the

Roman monarchy fall; the Papacy must of necessity fall with it. For the Roman empire is that beast which beareth up the whore of Babylon, as appeareth in the seventeenth chapter of this prophecy, where we shall (God willing) plainly and at large hear of the joint destruction of them both together.

It is added, ‘here is the patience and the faith of the saints,’ that is, here is required great patience of all God’s children, to wait and tarry till the performance and accomplishment of those things, and also faith and full assurance to believe that they shall in God’s appointed time come to pass. For few do believe these things, and therefore wait not with patience for the accomplishment thereof.

‘And I beheld another beast coming out of the earth which had two horns like a lamb, but he spake like the dragon,’ Rev. xiii. 11.

Having described the first beast, which is the Roman empire; now the Holy Ghost cometh to describe the second beast, which is the Papacy, or the kingdom of the great antichrist: for although he be described before in regard of his monarchy, that is, the civil jurisdiction which he exercised, as he was the seventh head of the beast, and head of the empire; yet here he is describ-

ed after another sort, that is, according to his ecclesiastical authority: and therefore he is called another beast, or a beast differing from the former; in that he exerciseth another power, beside the power of the heathen emperors of Rome, which is his spiritual jurisdiction, in which respect he is called the false prophet.

The second beast riseth out of the earth, as the former rose out of the sea: then it appeareth, that antichrist is, by his breed, a son of the earth, obscurely born, and by little and little creeping up out of his abject state, as did the Turk. It is here most truly said, that the kingdom of antichrist ariseth out of the earth, and is the very breed of the earth; for assuredly it never came from heaven. It was first hatched out of covetousness, ambition, pride, murders, treasons, poisonings, sorceries, enchantments, and such like. For history do shew, that from these roots the papacy grew to his exceeding height and altitude.

The second beast hath 'two horns like the lamb;' whereby is meant his civil and ecclesiastic power, or his kingdom and priesthood, which he falsely pretended to come from the Lamb: and therefore he giveth in his arms two keys, and hath two swords carried before him. So Boniface the VIII. shewed himself one day in apparel as a Pope,

and the next day in armour of the emperor; and the two horns in the Pope's mitre are signs hereof. But the Holy Ghost here calleth us, that these two horns are not the horns of the Lamb, but only like the horns of the Lamb: for he received not his power from the Lamb Christ, but from the devil, that is, the dragon with ten horns. Then thus it is, the papacy is the seventh head of the first beast, that is, the empire; and yet a beast by itself, with two horns like the Lamb, in respect of his joint power and authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, in which respect he is called even the eighth: and one of the seven, Rev. xvii. 11.

Although this second 'beast have two horns like the Lamb, yet he spake like the dragon,' that is, all his words and works, practices and proceedings, laws and decretals are for the dragon, of whom he hath his power, and throne, and great authority. So that whatsoever he pretendeth in religion, and matters of God's worship, as though he would be like the Lamb; yet assuredly he is altogether for the dragon and the devil, he is assured unto them, as all experience doth manifestly witness.

'And he did all that the first beast could do before him: and he caused the earth, and them that dwell therein to worship

‘the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed,’ Rev. xiii. 12.

Here is shewed, that this second beast was as mighty and strong as the first beast, and could do as much as he, even in his presence. Whereby is noted the great power and authority of the Papacy, in performing as much in the service of the Dragon against God and his church, as ever the empire of the heathen, and those wicked emperors could do; yea, he did much more against Christ and his religion than ever the persecuting emperors could do, even then when they were at their highest pitch. And all this he did in his presence, that is, in the sight and open view of the whole empire, or whole world.

‘And he caused the earth, and them that dwell therein,’ that is, all Papists, and worldlings, ‘to worship the first beast,’ that is, to receive the worship and religion of the old Roman tyranny, which set up and maintained idolatry: so then, although the power in the Papacy came under the name of Christ, yet in truth it was the same with the power of the persecuting empire; for the heathen emperors condemned the true worship of God, and set up false worship, even the worship of devils, which is idolatry, and so do the Popes also. So then we see that this second beast is all for the first beast,

that is, he levyeth all his power and authority to set up the worship and religion of the old Roman tyrants; and to force all men by cruel laws and decrees to receive and embrace the same. So this second beast is nothing better than the first; nay, in truth, a great deal worse.

} ‘And he did great wonders, so that he made fire to come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the signs which were permitted him to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make the image of the beast which had the wound of a sword, and did live,’ Rev. xiii. 13, 14.

These two verses contain two special things: the one is, the false and feigned miracles of antichrist; the other is the cursed effect thereof.

To the first, which is the wonders and miracles which antichrist should work, it is here said, that he should ‘make fire to come down from heaven, as Elias did:’ the meaning whereof is not, that the Pope could indeed cause fire to come down from heaven, as Elias did; but in the opinion of the blind world, they seemed to have as great power as Elias had: for, partly by counterfeit miracles, and partly by some

Strange things done by the power of Satan, the seduced world hath verily believed, that the Pope and his clergy had as great power to work miracles as ever Elias had.

Touching the second thing, which is the effect of these wonders: it is here said, that the inhabitants of the earth, that is, Papists and worldlings were grossly deceived and deluded by them even by those lying wonders, which were permitted him to do in the sight of the beast, that is, in the face and open view of the empire: according as the apostle foretold, that 'the coming of antichrist should be by the effectual working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and in all deceivable-ness of unrighteousness among them that perish,' &c. 2 Thes. ii. 9, 10. But concerning the Popish counterfeit signs and wonders, it is needless to write, being so well known unto all men as they are, and so common and notorious in history.

'Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make the image of the beast, which had the wound of a sword, and did live,' Rev. xiii. 14.

Now antichrist, having gotten the world under him by his counterfeit miracles, doth lay his commandment on them, to make the image of the beast. Now what is here meant by the image of the beast, is some-

what hard to discuss: some think, that by the image of the beast, which had the wound of the fword, and did live, is meant the repairing and the restoring of the decayed estate of the empire, by the Popes, to his full strength and virtue. We do read that the estate of the empire under Nero, Otho, Galba, and Vitellius, was weak and feeble, in comparison of that which was before under Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. We do read also that the Goths and Vandals made horrible rents and dissipations in the Roman empire. We do further read, that the empire was divided and rent in pieces, so that there was the emperor of the East, and the emperor of the West; yea, at last the empire of the West fell quite down; so that for the space of 300 years and more, there was no emperor of the West, till the bishop of Rome, Leo III. made Charles the Great, the king of France, emperor. Then was the empire of the West again erected, and in time grew to as great a height under the dominion of the Popes as before; yea, far greater. Now, I say, some do take this restoring of the decayed estate of the empire, by the Popes, to his former strength and power, to be the 'making of the image of the beast which had the wound of a fword, and did live.' But for my own part, I cannot be of that

opinion; and my reason is, that the restoring of the decayed estate of the empire to his former condition was the setting up of the beast himself; for the empire is the beast, and not the image of the beast; for we must needs grant, that the beast and the image of the beast are two different things. But the popes, in recovering the empire to his pristine estate, set up the beast again: and therefore not the image of the beast. Therefore the image of the beast cannot be understood of the restoration of the decayed estate of the empire. Besides this, it is here said, that the inhabitants of the earth had a great hand in the making this image. But the inhabitants of the earth bare small sway in the recovering and erection of the empire: (for therein the Popes were all in all, after it came into their hand.) Therefore this cannot be understood of the empire, but of some other things: let us then diligently search out what may be the true meaning of this place. It must needs be granted, that by the beast which had the wound of a sword and did live, is meant the recovered estate of the empire, as before, verse 12. And by the image thereof, I understand the form of government: for an image doth signify a likeness, a similitude, a figure or form of a thing. And as in all civil and ecclesiastical regiments there

is both a substance and a form, a matter and a manner; so here, having before set down, that antichrist had erected the substance and matter of the Roman tyranny; now he sheweth, that he would also set up the image and form of the same. For before, ver. 12. it is said, that antichrist, this second beast, caused the world to worship the first beast, that is, to receive and imbrace the laws, worship, and religion of the old heathenish Roman tyrants, as before hath been shewed: and now here is added, that he did not content himself with causing the inhabitants of the earth to worship the old beast in the substance of his religion; but also he layeth commandments upon them, to make his image, that is, to erect an external form of ecclesiastical government, after the very pattern and form of the government of the old empire; yea, so like it, that it is called the very image of the same. For, as the form of government under the old emperors was cruel and tyrannical, and altogether bent against the church; so the form of ecclesiastical government under the Popes was cruel and tyrannical, and altogether bent against the church; and therefore here it is called the image of it: for it is as like it as it can look. Then it followeth, that antichrist hath set up that external form of worship, which the

idolatrous Romans of old used, and that he hath renewed the persecuting empire, not only in substance of matter, but also in form of government: and therefore I conclude, that the popish church policy and external regiment is the very image of the beast.

Here the inhabitants of the earth are said to make the image of the beast, because they gave their consent to the making of it: for indeed the Popes themselves were the chief agents and doers of it.

‘ And it was permitted unto him to give
‘ a spirit unto the image of the beast, so that
‘ the image of the beast should speak, and
‘ should cause, that as many as would not
‘ worship the image of the beast, should be
‘ killed,’ Rev. xiii. 15.

Here is shewed, that this image of the beast was not a dead image, but a living image: for antichrist put a spirit into it; that is, life, and power, and great authority; insomuch that this image could speak, and not only speak, but speak with great authority and terror; so as whosoever would not worship this image, that is, submit himself to the popish hierarchy should be put to death. But may some man say, How did this image speak? I answer, by the Popes clergy. For the Romish rabble of cardinals, abbots, monks, priests, friars, and all

that cursed corporation were the very breath, life, and spirit of this image: I mean, that the life-blood of their external rigiment did lie in the execution thereof by the clergy, as it were in certain arteries and veins. For what was their outward form of government without this cruel execution of their stinging clergymen, but as a dead image without life? But when anti-christ had once consecrated and erected his Romish priest-hood, then did he put life into his image, which before he had caused to be made and erected. Then we do plainly see, that the popish hierarchy is not a bare resemblance of the old Roman policy; to stand as a picture on a wall, but hath a spirit put into it by the false prophet, and speaketh with such power and terror in all kingdoms, that it causeth all to be put to death that will not submit themselves unto it, and fall down and worship the beast. Who knoweth not this, that as many in the countries as would not embrace popery, and the old Roman tyranny, the popish clergy, their inquisitors, and other officers did condemn them in their courts as heretics, schismatics, and delivered them over, being condemned, to the secular power to be put to death?

‘ And he made all, both small and great, rich and poor, bond and free, to receive

‘ a mark in their right-hand or in their foreheads. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,’ Rev. xiii. 16, 17.

Antichrist is not content to murder and massacre in all countries which will not worship the image of the beast; that is, stoop to his government and authority: but he will go yet a step farther, and will have all sorts of people brought in bondage unto him, as his marked servants. For as men use to set a brand upon their sheep and other cattle, and to ear-mark them, that it might openly and manifestly appear to whom they appertain: so doth antichrist, this Romish beast, cause all men in all kingdoms to carry in open view his mark or brand, whereby all men see that they do appertain unto him.

It is here said, that all the vassals of antichrist, of what degree, estate or condition soever, must receive this mark in their right hand, or in their forehead; that is, they must openly profess and practise the worship and religion of the beast: for the forehead is put for the profession, and the right-hand for the action; so that in one of them at the least, every man must openly declare, that he acknowledgeth the Pope of Rome to be lord of his faith.

Moreover it is added, 'That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name;' the meaning is, that no man might traffic in the world, or have any doings amongst men; nay, he might not be suffered to live, except he had the mark of the beast in his forehead, or in his right-hand, that is, unless he did profess and practise the worship, the religion, laws, decrees, of the Pope. For the mark of the beast is put for his worship, religion, laws, decrees, regiments, and policy.

Moreover, the Pope's vassals have not only his mark upon them, whereby they may be known, but also the name of the beast; for they must be named after him, even as children bear the name of their fathers, and must be called of the Pope, or *papa*, papists. And not only so, but also, they have another privy mark upon them, and that is the number of his name, which is *Latinos*, or professors of the Latin religion, Latin kingdom, and Italian church, as shall by and by appear.

Now then, to grow to conclusion, and to make a brief recapitulation of all things here spoken concerning the second beast, which is antichrist: let us consider what increasings and proceedings he hath made, as it were by degrees.

First, Although he hath two horns like the Lamb, that is, civil and ecclesiastical power; yet he speaketh like the dragon; that is, he bendeth all his power and authority, wdrds and works for the devil.

Secondly, He doth as much as the first beast could do in the service of the dragon.

Thirdly, He causeth the first beast to be worshipped; that is, established the substance of his religion.

Fourthly, He maketh the image of the beast; that is, addeth a form to the substance.

Fifthly, He putteth life into his image by his clergy.

Sixthly, He will have his image worshipped and yielded unto on pain of death.

Lastly, He will have all men of all conditions to wear his livery, and to receive his mark, as it were his hired and covenant servants.

‘ Here is wisdom: let him that hath wit count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six.’ Rev. xiii 18.

Now last of all, the Holy Ghost telleth us that it is a very high point of wisdom and understanding to count the number of the beast, and requireth a sharp and pregnant wit; and withal, telleth us, that it is the

number of a man; that is, such as a man endued with God's Spirit may find out.— Then we are encouraged to search into it, since it is within the compass of mans' reach. It is no impossible thing. If therefore we could find out his name, we would desire no more, then the field were won, for his name would discover him, and descry him to all the world, and quite stop the mouths of the papists, so as they should never have any thing more to say. For if St. John had said expressly and in plain terms, that the Popes of Rome are this second beast, and the very antichrist himself, then the papists had been put to perpetual silence, all matters quasht, and all controversies ended betwixt them and us forever. But here the Holy Ghost doth not tell us his name plainly, but mystically, as many other things in this book, that the worldlings which should fulfil them might be blinded, whilst the eyes of God's elect are opened to see into the truth of all these matters. Well, to come to the point: St. John doth only here set down the numerative letters of the beasts name. He wrote in Greek, and he only setteth down three Greek letters or characters; which in Greek numeration make six hundred and sixty-six. Now further, we are to note, the numerative letters of the Greek word *Lateinos* do make just this

number. And yet further, we are to observe as a very special thing, that Irenæus, an ancient father of the church, who lived very near unto the apostles times, mentioneth this word *Lateinos*, as the name of the beast: and moreover affirmeth, that it was a common received opinion in his time, and before, that the beast should so be called.

Now then let us consider how this fitteth.

First, We know that the numerative letters of *Lateinos* do justly fit St. John's Greek numerative letters.

Secondly, We know that antichrist is the head of the Latin church, or Latin empire; and therefore this very *Lateinos*. For here we do not enquire after the name of any particular man, but about the name of a kingdom; for the beast is a kingdom, and a succession of men. Now Italy in old time was called *Latinum*, and the Italians *Latini*, which noteth of what country the beast should come. Moreover, the beasts name or name of the Roman empire is *Lateinos*, because the empire, both under the heathen tyrants, and the Popes especially, had all their religion, service, prayers, laws, decrees, writings, and translations in Latin: all was in Latin, Latin; the Pope preferred his Latin translation of the Bible before the Hebrew and Greek originals. Thus then it is, St. John telleth us plainly, ' the number

the beast is six hundred and sixty-six.'
Iæus saith, that *Lateinos* is his name,
which containeth just the number: there-
here we have his name, here he is
id. For if his name be *Lateinos*, we
search no further, we know who it is,
know who is meant: for is not the Pope-
anos? Are not the succession of them
ini? Are they not the heads of the La-
church, and Latin empire? have they
all their worship and service in Latin?
they not Latins? for what is the name
the Roman empire but *Lateinos*? and
it is the name of the Popish hierarchy
Lateinos? True it is indeed which the
ists say, that many names may be in-
ted, whose letters make this number:
the Spirit of God speaketh not of feign-
names, for thereof can come nothing
uncertainty: but he willeth us to count
number of his name, which then the
t had, that is, *Lateinos*. I do thus then
clude; The beast is a kingdom, and the
icy is the kingdom of the Latins: there-
the papacy is the beast.
he papacy is *Lateinos*, and containeth
number of the beast: for what other
archy can be shewed since the Revela-
was given, whose numerative letters
ain this foresaid number? assuredly
And therefore out of all doubt St.

John pointeth at the Roman empire, and monarchy of the Popes. For *Lateinos* doth both contain the number of the beast, according to St. John's computation, and also his name, which is in the Latin empire, or Roman empire. And thus have we heard the description of these two huge and monstrous beasts, the sea-beast, and the land-beast; which both from the apostles time hitherto have indeed played the beast against Christ and his church, and still do play the beasts, and will never cease playing the beasts, till their horns and hoofs, heads and bodies be clean cut off, which will be shortly, as we shall hear anon.

C H A P. XIV.

WE have heard in the former chapter the description of the two great and dreadful beasts. We have heard how mightily they have prevailed now many years, and reigned as monarchs of the earth. Now in this chapter we are to hear the fall and ruin of them both. So that the main drift and scope of this chapter, and all the chapters following until the twentieth

chapter, is to shew, that both the Roman empire and papacy shall ebb as fast as ever they did flow, shall wain as fast as ever they did wax, shall decrease as fast as ever they did increase, and fall down as fast as ever they did rise up, even until they come to utter ruin and desolation.

This chapter containeth seven principle things.

First, It sheweth that God had his church upon the earth, even then when it seemed to be utterly extinct by the prevailing of the two outragious beasts, Rev. xiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Secondly, It sheweth that the poor persecuted church did sincerely and zealously worship God even in the fire and flames of afflictions, verse 6, 7.

Thirdly, It sheweth that the gospel shall be preached with great success in these last days throughout many kingdoms, verse 8.

Fourthly, It sheweth that Rome shall fall down at the preaching of the gospel, verse 9, 10, 11.

Fifthly, It sheweth that all papists shall be condemned, and cast into hell fire for ever, verse 12, 13.

Sixthly, It sheweth that it shall go well with God's elect, which having refused the worship of the beast, do live and die in the Lord.

Lastly, It describeth the day of judgment, wherein all, both good and bad, shall have according to their deserts.

* Then I looked, and behold a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads,' Rev. xiv. 1.

Now at the last the Holy Ghost bringeth in Jesus Christ upon the theatre of the world, as it were to play his part in this tragedy, and to help the poor weak woman, which we heard of before, against the dragon, and the two monstrous beasts, which would have torn her in pieces, and utterly devoured her, if this Lamb Jesus Christ had not stepped in and rescued her. Well, now cometh in our Lord Jesus, and beginneth to stir in these matters, and to take upon him the protection and defence of the poor helpless woman, against both the dragon, and the dragon's too great instruments. But some may say, What is a poor lamb to encounter with a dragon, with a lion, with a leopard, and a bear? I answer, that although Christ be a Lamb to his church, even the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, and the Lamb that was a slain sacrifice from the beginning for the redemption of his elect: yet to all his enemies he is a most strong and terrible

lion, even the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as he is called before, Rey. v. 5. Now this most terrible Lion, even the Lord of hosts, the Lord mighty in battle, cometh forth to protect and defend his church against all her enemies, who is of such infinite might and puissance, that neither the old dragon, nor his young imps, nor all the cursed hell-hounds that bark, and bite, and take their part, shall ever be able to stand in his hands; for, rage they never so much he shall hamper them all well enough. For though he hath given them the reign a long time, and let them alone, and suffered them to play the tyrants with the woman his spouse; yet now he will no longer put it up at their hands, but will up and maintain the woman's cause, and bear her out against them all: nay, he will make ready his bow, that he may shoot off, and make his arrows drunk in the blood of her and his enemies, and will whet his glittering sword, that he may sheath it in the heart of antichrist and all his adherents. Therefore now let both the great beasts and their fire look to themselves; for here comes in one that will knock them all down, and lay them in the dust, that they shall never rise up again.—For this cause now at length St. John in a vision seeth a Lamb stand upon mount Zion, that is, Christ present with the

church: for mount Zion was an ancient figure of the church; as it is written, mount Zion, lying northward, is fair in situation, 'it is the joy of the whole earth, and the city of the great King,' Psal. xlvi. 2.— And again, 'The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,' Micah iv. 2.

Moreover, St. John feeth here 'with the Lamb a hundred forty and four thousand:' that is, the particular members of the church, putting a certain number for an uncertain, and specially alluding to the sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel, as before hath been shewed. For it might be demanded, where the church was when all the world wondered, and followed the first beast? Rev. vii. 4. And also when all, both small and great, rich and poor received the mark of the second beast? St. John answereth, that eyen then, in the midst of the heat of persecutions, God had his hid and invisible church, whom Jesus Christ did protect and preserve even in the very flames of persecutions, being always present with them, and amongst them, as he said to his disciples a little before his bodily departure from them: 'Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world.' And here he is said to 'stand upon mount Zion with his hundred forty and four thousand.' And

it is added, that this number of God's faithful elect children 'had his Father's name written in their foreheads:' that is, they did profess and practise the doctrine and religion of God their father only, utterly renouncing and abhorring the worship and religion of the beast. For the Father's name in this place is set opposite to the mark of the beast; to signify, that as the worshippers of antichrist received his mark; so the true worshippers of God received his brand, which is his Spirit, and the fruits thereof, whereby they were perfectly discerned from those which had the beast's mark. So then, it clearly appeareth from this place, that God preserved many thousands of his true worshippers, even in the days of the great antichrist, when there seemed to be very few or none remaining upon the earth, as it was in the days of Elias. In vain therefore do the papists ask us where our church was before Luther's time, since the holy apostle here stoppeth their mouth, and telleth us plainly, that Christ had his little flock in the wilderness, even then, when it was in greatest straits, and as we say, driven to the walls. And therefore visibility is no sound note of the church, as the papists do most ignorantly dispute. For it is a fond and absurd kind of reasoning, to say there is no church at all, because it

doth not visibly appear: as if a man should reason, that there is no moon in the heavens, because sometimes there is none seen, in the change.

‘ And I heard a voice from heaven as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps, Rev. xiv. 2.

Here is set forth how his company of true worshippers do magnify and praise God for his great mercies towards them.

First, John heareth a voice from heaven, that is, an heavenly voice, or the voice of the church praising and glorifying God. For we have heard before, that heaven in this book is sometimes put for the church upon the earth, and the reasons thereof, Rev. viii. 1. Wherefore therefore the church is assembled to hear the word, and to pray, and give thanks, there is a voice from heaven, or an heavenly voice. Now this voice is compared to three things,

First, ‘ To the sound of many waters.’

Secondly, ‘ To the sound of a great thunder.’

Thirdly, ‘ To the voice of harpers harping with their harps.’

It is likened to many waters, because it proceedeth from sundry sorts of people, of sundry nations, countries and kingdoms,

as the word *waters* is taken afterwards in this prophecy, Rev. xvii. 1. It is compared to *thunder*, chap. xvii. 15, because the prayers and invocations of the true church are as loud in the ears of God as any thunder-crack. It is compared to ‘ harpers harping with their harps,’ both because their spiritual worship and service is as sweet unto God as any music unto men; as also, because all God’s faithful people do tune together among themselves, and in their worship, as the strings of a well-tuned instrument of music, or as many musicians playing together, which make a sweet harmony, and most melodious ditty.

‘ And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders, and no man could learn that song, but the hundred forty and four thousand which were brought from the earth,’ Rev. xiv. 3.

Now it sheweth how this holy society of the faithful do continue their praising and glorifying of God; they are not weary of well-doing, but hold on constantly in the course of God’s worship, having new songs of thanksgiving in their mouths, and serving God daily with renewed affections, as men inflamed with the zeal of God’s glory: and all this they do perform, ‘ before the throne, before the four beasts, and the

‘elders;’ that is, in the presence of God and his angels, and his holy congregation. ‘And no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand;’ that is, none of the reprobates and ungodly worldlings could inwardly feel and understand this spiritual worship, but only the elect, to whom it is given to understand the secrets of God, and the mysteries of his Son’s kingdom.

‘These are they which are not defiled with women, for they are virgins: these follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these are brought from men being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb. And in their mouths was found no guile; for they are without spot before the throne of God,’ Rev. xiv. 4, 5.

This holy company are not defiled with women, that is, with gross and divers sins, or rather with idolatrous pollutions: ‘for they are virgins,’ that is, chaste worshippers of God, which are not polluted with the defilements of antichrist. ‘These follow the Lamb Christ whithersoever he goeth.’ They hear his voice, they profess his worship, and obey his doctrine; they abhor antichrist, they follow not the beast, nor receive his mark. ‘They are bought from men, and bought from the earth,’ as it is said before; that is, they are

redeemed and bought with a price from the corrupt lump of mankind, and cursed race of ‘ Adam, that they might be the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb,’ that is, wholly consecrated to his worship, and to serve him in righteousness and true holiness all the days of their life. ‘ In their mouths was found no guile;’ that is, they do declare their innocence and uprightness both in their words and works, as those which Christ hath chosen out of this world, and bought with a price through his blood, in whom they are without spot or speck before God.

‘ Then I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having an everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred and tongue, and people. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,’ Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

Hitherto the Holy Ghost hath taught us how the church was preserved under the tyranny of antichrist, the greatest waves of persecutions, and that even then they did purely and faithfully worship the true God. Now he proceedeth to foreshew the ruin and downfall of antichrist, and plainly to

propheſy the utter decay of the kingdom of Babel. This doctrine therefore we are to hearken unto with great attention and cheerfulness, because it doth ſo much concern our good, and the good of the whole church; alſo because we live in the days wherein we ſee it is in part fulfilled.

First, Therefore we are to understand what is meant by this angel here mentioned, to wit, not any celestial angel, or invisible spirit, as it is ſundry times taken before: but by this angel, and the two angels following, are meant all the faithful minifters of the gospel, which ſhould be raifed up in theſe laſt days, for the overthrow of Rome, and the delivering of the church from under the captivity of antichriff: which may plainly appear by this that is ſaid; this angel preacheth the everlasting gospel unto them that dwell on the earth, which cannot properly agree to the celeſtial ſpirits. We have heard out of the tenth chapter, that Jefus Chriff did open the little book, which is the Bible, and did give authority to his faithful minifters to go preach and publish the doctrine thereof to many nations, countries, and kingdoms: Rev. x. 14. unto that agreeeth this which is here ſpoken of, and is a further opening and declaring of that which is there ſet down. For as there Jefus Chriff cometh

down from heaven, and openeth the little book, which had been long shut up under the darkness of popery, and the smoak which came out of the bottomless pit: so here Christ Jesus raised up his faithful ministers and preachers to publish and proclaim the doctrine of the gospel, which had long lain hidden under outragious persecutions of the two monstrous and most hideous beasts. To this also agreeth that which is written in the eighteenth chapter of this book, where St. John seeth an angel come down from heaven, having great power, so that the earth was lightened with his glory. By which angel is meant all the preachers of this age. And the angel is said to have great power: for what is more powerful than the ministry of the word? And moreover it is said, that the earth was lightened with his glory, that is, with the brightness of the preaching of the gospel, whereby the darkness of popery was dispersed and driven away, and Babylon falleth upon it, as there you may read, and as here we shall see the like effect by and by.

Moreover, it is here said, that this ' angel flyeth in the midst of heaven:' that is, very swiftly carryeth this everlasting gospel through all the church. For when God's appointed time was come, wherein he would go about the overthrow of popery,

he caused his everlasting gospel to be set abroad, and to spread over many kingdoms and nations, as we see this day. Now because those kingdoms where God would have the knowledge of his gospel divulged were many and great, therefore here is expedition required: and this angel doth carry it not standing but flying. And all this we see perfectly fulfilled with our eyes, when God raised up Luther, Zuinglius, Melanthon, Peter Viret, Calvin, Bucer, Bullinger, Peter Martyr, and all their worthy successors unto this day, which have spread the everlasting gospel very far, and carried it very swiftly over England, Scotland, Germany, Denmark, Polonia, Suevia, Russia, and many parts of France and Flanders. Another reason why this angel is said to fly in the midst of heaven, is, because no power of man shall ever be able to stay the course of this everlasting gospel which this angel carrieth abroad, no more than men are able to stop the course of the sun in the heavens, or a cloud in the sky. For this angel flyeth in the midst of heaven, far above the reach of the beast, and all kings and potentates that stand for kingdom of the beast. Therefore let them do all that they can, they shall never be able to stop the course of the gospel, for it is called the arm of God, and his very arm

holdeth it forth to the world; and who is able to bend it in, or to turn it backward?

There are three reasons why the gospel is called everlasting.

First, Because it is his own nature everlasting, as it is written, ‘The word of the Lord endureth for ever,’ 1 Pet. i. 25.

Secondly, Because it putteth us in possession of everlasting things; as it is written, ‘Thy word, O Lord, endureth for ever in heaven,’ Psalm cxix.

Thirdly, And principally, because as it was long before antichrist was hatched, so it shall continue when he and his kingdom is dead and rotten.

‘Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory unto him,’ &c. Rev. xiii. 7.

Here is set down the doctrine which this angel preacheth with a loud voice, that is, with great zeal. The sum whereof is this, ‘Fear God, and give glory unto him, and worship him that made heaven and earth,’ &c. The sense is, that the true and everlasting God should only be feared and worshipped, and all glory should be given unto him alone through Christ, and none to antichrist, none to cardinals and legats, none to angels, none to saints, none to images, rods, crosses and crucifixes. Here then

is now an abridgment of the doctrine everlasting gospel; namely, that men

should only fear God, and worship him, and give all glory to him alone; and not to any creature. And the reason is yielded, because the hour of his judgment is come, that is, the time of the manifestation of the gospel, or laws of the most high God: for so the word judgment is often taken in the scriptures: Here are we to observe one special thing, to wit, that the gospel which this angel flieth withal, containeth the brief sum of all the doctrine which Luther, Calvin, Peter Martyr, and the rest have taught out of God's word, and agreeth in all points with it. For what other thing did they all preach, teach, and write, but that men should turn from idols to the living God? from fearing, glorifying, and worshipping creatures, to fear, worship, and glorify God alone which hath made all things? What other thing do all the preachers of this age publish and proclaim in all their sermons, but this, 'Fear God, and give glory only to him?' Is not this the epitome and short sum of all the doctrine of the preachers of England, Scotland, Germany, France, Denmark, and all the rest? and therefore I conclude, that this angel must needs be understood of the preachers of this last age, which now these fourscore years have sounded the trumpet of the gospel against all the inventions of

popery. And, blessed be God, ~~we see~~ these things fall out in our days, and are eye-witnesses of the fulfilling of them.

‘ And there followed another angel, saying, It is fallen, it is fallen, Babylon that great city: for she gave to all nations to drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication,’ Rev. xiv. 8.

Here is set down the blessed effect of the preaching of this everlasting gospel, which is the downfall of Babylon. For as when the clear sun ariseth upon the earth, the thick mists and clouds are dispersed: even so when the bright beams of the gospel do shine forth unto the world, Babylon, that dark kingdom vanisheth away incontinently. And as it is written in the eighteenth chapter: so soon as ‘ the earth was lightened’ with the glory of this everlasting gospel, Babylon immediately falleth. Therefore now before I go any further, my purpose, through the assistance of God, is to prove these five main points out of this verse, and that which followeth unto the twentieth chapter, to wit,

Firstly, That Babylon here signifieth Rome.

Secondly, That Rome shall fall, and how.

Thirdly, That Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter desolation in this life.

Fourthly, By whom, and when it shall be overthrown.

Lastly, The causes of the utter ruin and overthrow thereof.

But before I go about to prove that Babylon is Rome, and how Rome is to be taken, I would have it carefully observed what is meant by Rome, *viz.* not the topography of Rome, that is, so much ground only as is compassed within the walls of that city, but the regiment, government, and prerogative that is claimed by virtue of the monarchy whereof Rome is the head. By Rome is meant the power and authority of Rome: or to speak plainly, by Rome is meant the Roman monarchy. Further, we are here to observe the reason why the Holy Ghost calleth Rome Babylon; for Rome literally and properly taken, is not Babylon; in as much as they were two divers cities, one in Italy, the other in Chaldea: but Rome is called Babylon mystically, figuratively, and, as the Holy Ghost speaketh, spiritually, and by a kind of allusion: for as the old eastern Babylon did a long time oppress the church of the Jews; so Rome this western Babylon, hath long oppressed the church of the Christians: as the eastern Babylon did many years hold down the people of God in miserable bondage and servitude; so the western Babylon did a long time keep the Christian church in spiritual thraldom and misery. In which

respects Rome is spiritually compared to Sodom and Egypt: to Sodom for filthiness, and to Egypt for idolatry, and keeping God's church in spiritual bondage and slavery. And thus we see the reason why Rome is called Babylon, which is not simply and properly, but after a sort, that is, by a phrase of speech, or trope, which they call a *metonyme*, or changing of names, when that is given to one thing which is proper to another, for the likeness of quality that it hath with it, or adjoined unto it.

Now, having shewed the reason why Rome is called Babylon, and what is meant by Rome, we are to proceed to the first point; which is to prove, that Babylon in this place signifieth Rome; which, altho' it be granted of all sound divines, and avouched in the writings of the best learned, both new and old, so as it shall need no great proof; yet will I add three or four reasons out of this book, to make it more plain and apparent.

First, Therefore, I do thus reason out of the seventeenth chapter and last verse, ' Babylon is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth:' but there was no other city which did reign over the kings of the earth when John wrote this book, but only Rome: therefore Rome is

Babylon. For, as for Jerusalem, it was at that time made a heap of stones. The first proposition is avouched by the angel of God, expounding unto John what is meant by the great whore, whose damnation he had shewed him before; and by the woman which sat upon a scarlet coloured beast. ‘The woman which thou sawest (saith the angel to St. John) is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth;’ Rev. xvii. 18. that is to say, Rome, or the Romish synagogue and malignant church. For the angel could not speak more plainly, except he should have named Rome, then to say thus; ‘The woman, the great whore of Babylon is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.’ For if one should say, The great city of England; every man knoweth that thereby is meant London: if one should say, The great city of France, every one knoweth that thereby is meant Paris: so when the angel saith, ‘The great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth:’ all that lived in those times knew that thereby was meant Rome: for Rome was the chief city of the monarchy, and is, put in this book for the whole monarchy, and the religion thereof, as hath been said before.

My second reason is this: ‘Babylon is

‘ the mother of whoredoms, and abominations of the earth. Babylon is that great whore, with whom have committed fornication the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of the earth made drunk with the wine of her fornication:’ Rev. xvii.

But Rome, and none but Rome is such a one, therefore Rome is Babylon.

My third argument is this: Babylon is that city which hath had seven several governments: but only Rome hath had seven several kinds of government: therefore Rome is Babylon.

The preposition is proved from the words of the angel, expounding unto John what is meant by the seven heads of the scarlet coloured beast whereupon the woman sat. ‘ The seven heads (saith he) are seven kings;’ Rev. xvii. 9. that is, seven orders or states of kingly government; for seven kings in this place are not put for seven several men which were kings, as some do take it: but for seven several governments, as it is taken in Daniel vii. 17. ‘ The four great beasts,’ saith the angel there, ‘ are four kings,’ that is, four kingdoms, governments, or monarchies, as all men know. So here, by seven kings is meant the seven several regiments of Rome; that is to say, by kings; consuls, *Decemviri*, Dictators, *Triumviri*, emperors, and Popes, whereof the first

‘ five were then fallen’ when John wrote, ‘ one was,’ that is, the empire, ‘ and one was to come, that is the papacy.

My last argument is this: Babylon is that city which is situate upon seven hills: but only Rome of all cities in the world is situated upon seven hills, therefore Rome is Babylon.

The preposition is avouched by the angel, which saith in the seventeenth chapter, that the seven heads of the scarlet coloured beast ‘ are seven mountains’ whereon the ‘ woman sitteth,’ that is, seven hills whereon the city of Rome is situated, whose names are these: *Capitalinus, Palatinus, Aventinus, Esquilinus, Celius, Viminalis, and Quirinalis*, as all poets and historiographers do testify. One saith thus of Rome.

Septem quæ una sibi muro circumdedidit arces.

Another thus:

Septem urbs alta jugis toti quæ præsidet orbi.

Another called Rome [*eptakephalos*,] ‘ the city with seven heads,’ that is, seven hills. It is clear then by these reasons, that Babylon in this place signifieth Rome. As for the exposition of the papists, which affirmeth that Babylon here signifieth the universal society of the wicked, it is fond and ridiculous: for the Holy Ghost saith, ‘ Babylon is that city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.’ Rev. xviii. 7.

But to say that the universal society of all the wicked reigneth over the kings of the earth, is absurd and ridiculous. Therefore to say that Babylon is the universal society of the wicked, is absurd and ridiculous. The distinction of the Jesuits here is also as frivolous as the expositions; for they say, if Babylon be Rome, then it must be understood of Rome under the heathen emperors: but not under the Popes. But the angel saith, ‘The woman,’ that is, the whore of Babylon, or antichrist, ‘sitteth upon seven mountains:’ *Ergo*, she sitteth at Rome, and Rome is the seat of antichrist, and consequently, Rome under the Popes is Babylon. Moreover, we may reafon thus against the Popish distinction; that which was Babylon under the heathen emperors, is the same which is here prophesied to be the chief city and seat of antichrist: but Rome was then Babylon. *Ergo* Rome is now Babylon; for Rome is that city which the angel saith should be the seat of antichrist: and this book doth shew, that the great antichrist should reign in the same city where the heathen emperors had reigned: and therefore it standeth firm, that Rome under the Popes is Babylon.

This being then granted, that Babylon here is Rome; it followeth, that Rome

shall fall: for the Holy Ghost saith, ' Babylon is fallen,' speaking in the present tense, as the manner of the scripture is in prophesying of things to come. For whatsoever God hath determined to come to pass, is, as it were already done, because of the certainty of it: and for this cause also the word is doubled: 'It is fallen, it is fallen.' We see then most clearly, that almost fifteen hundred years before Rome began to fall, the certain fall thereof was fore-told. This place itself is clear enough to prove my second point, which is, that Rome shall fall. But my purpose is to reduce and gather all the five chapters following to certain heads, to prove the main points which I have propounded: first then I reason thus to prove the second point, that Room shall fall: that city and kingdom which hath the seven vials of God's wrath emptied and poured down upon it, cannot stand, but must needs fall: but Rome is that city, which hath the seven vials of God's wrath poured down upon it: therefore Rome cannot stand long, but must needs fall. The preposition is manifest, and not to be denied. The assumption is proved throughout all the fifteenth chapter, and especially in the tenth and second verses; in the tenth verse the vials of God's wrath are expressly said to be poured down

‘ upon the throne of the beast:’ and in the second verse of that chapter it is avouched, that ‘ the second vial was poured down upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped her image.’ How then can the throne of the beast hold out? or how can they which have received the beasts mark stand up long? For there is a great emphasis or vehemency in the manner of speech. For he doth not simply say, the wrath of God; but the fulness of God’s wrath: he doth not say, should be a little sprinkled; but poured down, as it were by pail-fulls upon the kingdom of the beast. How then can the kingdom of the beast stand, which hath so many great ordinance, and so many double cannons discharged and shot off against it? Surely it must needs fall.

My second reason is this: ‘ The beast that was, and is not, and yet is; shall go into perdition:’ Rev. xvii. 8. But Rome is the beast that was, and is not, and yet is: therefore Rome shall go into perdition. The assumption is set down chap. xvii. ver. 8. For the Roman monarchy was great in the days of Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Claudius, Tiberius; and therefore it is said, that it was. But in the reign of Nero, Otho, Galba, and Vitellius, it was greatly decayed, and therefore it is said, ‘ It is not;’

meaning, so great as it had been: and yet in some sort it was; and therefore it is said, ‘And yet is.’ Now this ‘beast shall go into perdition.’ Therefore the Roman monarchy shall be destroyed, and consequently, the papacy: for the Roman empire holdeth up the papacy, as it is written, that ‘the woman or whore of Babylon sitteth upon the scarlet coloured beast, which had seven heads and ten horns,’ that is, the Roman monarchy which beareth up the whore, and beareth up the papacy: but the Holy Ghost saith, this beast, that is, the Roman empire, ‘shall go into perdition.’ Then it followeth, that the papacy shall follow after: for if the beast that she sitteth upon, and which beareth her, fall under her, then she must needs fall together with him. But we see, God be thanked, that the Roman monarchy is in a manner quite fallen; therefore the papacy cannot stand long.

My third argument is this: ‘The beast that was, and is not, being even the eighth, and is one of the seven, shall go into destruction,’ verse 11. But Rome is the beast that was, and is not, being the eighth, and one of the seven: therefore Rome shall go into destruction. The assumption is set down chap. xvii. ver. 11. For the papacy or dominion of the Popes is the seventh head of the beast in respect of their civil

power, and yet a beast by themselves, that is, an eight in respect of their ecclesiastical power. Now the angel faith flatly, 'they shall both go together into destruction,' that is, both the empire and the papacy. For as the dominion of the Popes goeth down, so also their worship and religion goeth down with it: and for this cause it is expressly set down in the nineteenth chapter, that 'the beast and the false prophet,' that is, the Roman empire and the papacy 'were both destroyed together.' Since then the Holy Ghost hath spoken it twice for failing, that Rome shall go into perdition, and shall go into destruction; I take it to be a very sound consequence, that Rome shall fall, and shall be destroyed. But how shall it fall, may some man say? Or wherein shall it fall? I answer, that it shall fall in the credit and estimation of her doctrine; it shall fall in wealth and riches; it shall fall in power and authority. And in all these it shall fall by degrees as it did rise up by degrees: it shall not fall at once, as it did not rise up at once.

This is set down in the sixteenth chapter, where the fall of Rome is compared to the drying up of the river Euphrates, which was dried up by degrees: thus it is, Euphrates was a great river which did run very near unto the old Babylon in Chaldea,

and it was the wall and fortification of the city; in so much, that Cyrus and Darius, the kings of the Medes and Persians, laying siege against it, could not take it, till by policy they digged water trenches, and turned the water another way, and so dried them up, that the Holy Ghost saith, 'The way was prepared for them to pass over.' Now, as this Euphrates was the strength and fortification of old Babylon: so the honour, wealth, riches, power and authority of Rome is the very fortification of it. But the punishing angel is commanded to pour down the vial of wrath upon this Euphrates; Rev. xvi. 12. that is, upon all that upholdeth or fortifieth Rome, and forthwith it dried up; that is, all the credit, power, riches, and authority of Rome did diminish daily, doth diminish, and shall diminish by degrees unto the end of the world. For the utter destruction of Rome is not yet come, but it is greatly decayed from that it was fourscore years ago: and if it continue decaying eighteen years more, as assuredly it shall, then will it be brought to a low ebb. Since Luther's time we know how the Pope's Euphrates hath dried up; but there is yet much water left, and it is yet too deep for the kings of the earth to pass over and take it. But it shall ebb so low, that the kings of Europe shall easily pass

over and take it, as we shall hear afterwards. But in the mean time we see that it falleth, and that it is in falling, and the work of God goeth forward every day.— For now in this age, God be thanked, many kings and princes, with great multitudes of their subjects have their eyes opened to behold, that the Romish religion is abominable; and that the papacy is the very kingdom of the great antichrist. And whereas before they worshipped the beast, now they hold up their hands only to the God of heaven, and glorify him in his Son Jesus Christ. Now we see that many laws are made in sundry kingdoms and provinces to abolish that usurped power of the bishop of Rome: Many acts, edicts, and injunctions are set forth in sundry nations, and kingdoms of Europe to destroy, root out, and deface all monuments of idolatry and superstition, which antichrist had erected in all kingdoms.

Now the Popes which were honoured as gods in the earth, are counted and adjudged as the most vile and abominable creatures that live upon the earth. Doth not all this experimentally shew that Babylon is fallen, and that Babylon doth fall by degrees? It is very palpable, we need no further proof for this second point. But here we are further to observe, that the Jesuites,

perceiving the great decay of Rome, and the continual drying of their Euphrates, do bestir them to stop the leak, that it might not dry up altogether. Even as when men let out the waters of great fish ponds, so as the water waxeth low, we see the fishes skip and plunge, and take on wonderfully: so the Jesuites, perceiving the waters of their Romish Euphrates to impair and dry up daily, do mightily take on, digging and searching every day to open the springs, and to find out some fersh fountains to maintain their great fish-pond, and to keep the waters deep enough, that there may be no safe passage over for the kings of the earth to come and take their great Babylon. All this doth appear out of the sixteenth chapter of this prophecy: where St. John in a vision seeth 'three unclean spirits like frogs, coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet,' Rev. xvi. 13. By which frogs the Holy Ghost meaneth the Jesuites and seminary priests, which are compared to frogs for three reasons:

First, That as frogs delight in filthy lakes and puddles; so the Jesuites delight in the filthy puddles of idolatry and superstition.

Secondly, As frogs make a great croak.

ing in their marsh grounds: so the Jesuites make a great croaking in kings courts, in noblemen's houses, and gentlemen's houses, and almost every where, where they can get any entertainment, croaking and crackling of the Pope's supremacy, the Popes holiness, the Pope's blessing, the Pope's keys, the Pope's power, Peter's chair, Peter's successors, Christ's vicar, and many good morrows, **I** know not what.

Thirdly, As frogs are all of one nature and quality, delighting in croaking and living in puddles: so the Jesuites are all of one mind and disposition in evil, croaking every where to maintain their Euphrates, and living daily in whoredom, Sodomy, and all kind of outragious beastliness. But that I may more fully persuade the conscience of the reader, that by these frogs are meant the Jesuites and seminary priests; let us seriously weigh that which goeth before, and that which followeth after in this text, and we shall discern it to be very clear and apparent.

First, It is said, verse 10th, that when the fifth angel poured out his vial of God's wrath upon the throne of the beast, by and by his kingdom waxed dark; that is, the majestic power, pomp, credit, and estimation of antichrist began to be

diminished, obscured, and to suffer a great eclipse: which thing was fulfilled shortly after Luther's preaching. And presently it followeth, that 'they gnawed their tongues for sorrow:' that is, they were full of fury and rage, barking and grinning like mad dogs, or rather like hell-hounds, against all such as send the gospel abroad, whereby their Babylon began to shake. For at the first, when the gospel began to peep forth, they did despise it, as a thing which they could easily suppress; but within a short time they found, that neither by excommunication, wherewith in former times they had, even as it were with lightning and thunder, caused kings and nations to tremble; neither by force of wars and bloody slaughters, neither by any skill in learning, nor by treacheries they could any thing prevail, but that the gospel did still more and more lay open their filthiness and shame; then did they become, and so do they continue unto this day, even as mad-men in sorrow and rage which the Holy Ghost expresseth, in saying, that 'they gnawed their tongues for sorrow, and blasphemed God,' &c. whereby it is evident, that the beast, and all that received his mark, are full of fiery hatred and malice, and cannot tell which way to be revenged. For the more they

strive, the more they lose. Fain would they have popery restored to his ancient credit and dignity, and they devise what they can to bring it about; but it will not be. For their kingdom waxeth darker and darker, weaker and weaker: and that is a dagger unto them, and a grief of all grief, which maketh them gnaw their tongues, and gnash their teeth for sorrow, Rev. xvi.

11. But yet for all this, 'they repented not of their works,' (saith St. John) and therefore God is more incensed against them, and causeth 'the sixth angel to power out another vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof dried up;' as we have heard. Now then observe carefully, and note it diligently, that the frogs came forth upon the darkening of the kingdom of the beast, and the drying up of their Euphrates. For, who knoweth not, the Pope and his accomplices, perceiving the weakening and diminishing of their kingdom, have sent out these Jesuites and seminary priests into all parts of Europe, to repair the ruins of Rome, if it were possible? and this is one circumstantial reason to prove these three frogs to be understood of the Jesuites.— But let us proceed to open the whole description of the Holy Ghost, that it may yet more plainly appear:

First, These frogs are called ‘unclean spirits,’ Rev. xvi. 13. because they are the very limbs of the the devil, full of filthiness and uncleanness.

Secondly, They are called spirits, because they come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

Thirdly, They are called three in number, being in truth nearer three thousand, because they proceed out of three several mouths, the dragon, the beast; and the false prophet: that is, the devil, the Roman empire, and the papacy: three horrible monsters, three terrible bug-bears, which with one consent conspire together against the gospel, to uphold their Babylon, and to stop the leak of their Euphrates. Now these three frogs are said to come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, because they come with the very mind and message of the Pope, and the Roman empire, and so consequently with the very mind and spirit of the dragon. For they are the very breath of the Pope, and the spirits of the devils, as like him, as if they had been spit out of his mouth. They are sent on the devil’s errand, and the Pope’s embassage into all countries and kingdoms, and are taught their lesson, that they shall say, and instructed what they shall do, and what

courses they shall take with men, both kings, nobles, and the meaner sort: and for this cause the Holy Ghost saith, they came out of the very mouth, the very heart and the very bowels of the Pope, and of the devil. And although these Jesuites and seminary priests are called of the favourites, catholic doctors, holy fathers, &c. yet the Holy Ghost saith flatly, they are the spirits of devils, working false and feigned miracles, and with great efficacy of error, deluding and deceiving the simple and blind multitude, Rev. xvi. 14. We see then, that the Holy Ghost in all this description doth plainly note out the Jesuites and seminary priests: for to whom can these things here spoken of agree, but only to them? And do not we which live in these days sensibly see and discern the fulfilling of all these things? Surely we cannot but see and feel them, unless we be wilfully blind, and do of purpose blind-fold and hood-wink ourselves. But the Holy Ghost goeth yet further, and doth more fully, and as it were demonstratively point them out unto us, describing them by their office, which is, 'to go unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty,' Rev. xvi. 14. Who ignorant that the Jesuites and seminary priests are

sent out to all kings and nobles of the whole world, that favour them and their proceedings? Are they not croaking in corners thick and threefold in all parts of this land? Are they not practising of treacheries and treasons against our most gracious king and the whole state? Are they not plotting the destruction and subversion of this church and commonwealth? Nay, as the Holy Ghost saith, the chief end of their coming abroad is to solicit and gather the kings of the earth unto battle against God, against Christ, and against all true professors of religion. The battle betwixt them is here called, ‘The battle of the great day of God Almighty,’ that is, that battle wherein the Almighty God will have the day, and go away with the victory. For it followeth, that the Jesuites and seminary priests did prevail with the seduced kings of the earth so far, as to gather them together to a place; which in Hebrew is called *Armageddon*, that is to say, a place where they shall be destroyed, and that with such an horrible slaughter, that the place shall take a name thereof. For it was an usual thing among the Hebrews to call the place where any famous thing fell out by a name which did report the same to all posterity, as, Kibroth Hataavah, the graves of concupiscence; Hamon Gog, the multitude of

Gog; and divers such like. And so here Armageddon, the destruction of an army, because the kings of the earth and their armies which shall fight against the church at the instigation of the Jesuites, shall come to a place, where they shall have a notable overthrow. This word Armageddon may fitly be derived of two Hebrew words, that is to say, *Cherem*, which signifieth destruction, and *Gedubb*, which signifieth an army; that is, the destruction of an army: or as some say, and that very judicially, it may come of *Gener-mah Gidnon*, which signifieth the subtilty of destruction; because the blind kings and nobles of the earth shall, by the subtilty and crafty persuasions of the Jesuites and seminary priests, be enticed to fight against the protestants in a place where they shall have a famous foil. Some derive Armageddon of *Har*, which in Hebrew signifieth a mountain, and *Megiddo*, which is the place where the godly king Josias was slain: and so this place should be called Armageddon, the mountain of *Megiddo*, for the slaughter of kings that shall be there. To the which the prophet Zechariah alludeth, saying, 'In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddo, Zech. xii. 11. Well, we see that all these significations and deri-

vations of Armageddon, come to one thing in effect; which is, that the great armies which assemble themselves in battle against the Lord shall be destroyed: and therefore it is not much material to dispute which is the more likely signification of the word. But this let us observe for our comfort, that whensoever we shall see the kings and captains, nobles and potentates of the earth, being solicited by the Jesuites, priests, and the false prophet, to levy great armies, and make great powers to fight against the gospel, and the true professors thereof, for the maintenance of great Babylon, they shall not prevail but be utterly overthrown and destroyed; as in part we see fulfilled in the year of our Lord 1588, when the great and invincible Armado of the Spaniards, as they thought, which was long in preparing against us, and at last, by the instigation of the Jesuites, brought upon us, came to Armageddon, as we know, God be praised. And in all time to come, in the like case, let them look for the like success. Well, now to come to some conclusions of this point; we do plainly see that Rome falleth, their kingdom waxeth dark, their Euphrates drieth up, and they espy it. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet send out their frogs into all countries and kingdoms,

hoping to prevent it by the help of the kings of the earth, and especially the king of Spain: but alas! all in vain, for they must come to Armageddon when they have done all that they can. For God fighteth from heaven against them, God bringeth them down, and no power of man is able to uphold them.

But now let us proceed to prove the third main point; which is, that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter desolation. For all sound divines are persuaded of the fall of Babylon, and do grant that it falleth, and is in falling: but all are not so thoroughly persuaded of the final fall thereof in this life. Therefore now I will prove by manifest scripture that Rome shall fall finally.

First, If the things be deeply considered, and narrowly looked into, which St. John saith shall fall out upon the pouring forth of the seventh vial of God's wrath by the seventh angel, they do fully portend a deadly downfall and utter overthrow of Rome: For the seventh vial is not poured upon the earth, or sea, or fountains of waters, or on the sun, Rev. xvi. 17, as the first four vials were, which signified some particular judgment; but it was poured forth into the very air, which signifieth the universality of it, and containeth the

most general and most grievous judgment and vengeance of Almighty God upon the whole body of the kingdom of antichrist, a little before the last day.

The text saith, that upon the pouring forth of this vial, ‘there was a loud voice heard out of the temple of heaven from the throne:’ Rev. xvi. 17. that is, from the very presence of God, saying, ‘It is done,’ it is dispatched, the utter overthrow of Rome is fully concluded of, and all things finished which belong to the pouring forth of the seven vials, which contain the seven last plagues, wherein the whole wrath of God is fulfilled, as appeareth Rev. xv. 1. As before it is said, ‘Babylon is fallen,’ because it should certainly fall: so here God himself saith, ‘It is done,’ because it shall certainly be done. For whatsoever God hath determined to be done, is as it were already done, because it shall most certainly be effected. Since then the Lord hath pronounced this of Rome, there remaineth nothing but a daily accomplishment of it: and let all the papists know for a certainty, that they must go to their geer, they must come to their payment, there is no way of evasion.

For, hath the Lord spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? Now upon this that God saith, ‘It is done,’ followeth present-

ly, that there ' were voices and thunderings, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, even so mighty an earthquake, *Rey. xvi. 18.* What is meant by thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes in this book, I have before shewed: to wit, commotions, seditions, tumults, uproars, and alterations of states, kingdoins, and commonwealths: and then the meaning of this place is, that there shall be horrible shakings, concussions, tumults, and great alteration of state in all the kingdoms which are subject to antichrist, none of them shall escape. For this seventh vial of God's wrath upon the kingdom of the beast, is compared to a most horrible and blustering tempest, raised up in the whole air, that is, in all places of antichrist's dominions. And it is specially to be noted, as a thing of great moment, that the Holy Ghost saith, ' there was never such an earthquake as this since the world began, and since men were upon the earth.' For assuredly, so soon as the seventh angel poureth forth his vial, the kingdom of popery shall go down amain, which shall not be long before the end of the world, as all circumstances here do shew. After all this, St. John telleth us the effect of this thundering, lightning,

and extraordinary earthquake; which is, that 'the great city was divided into three parts,' Rev. xvi. 19. that is, there shall be a most horrible rent and division in the city of Rome, and throughout all the Pope's dominions.

What this rent and division is, and how it shall be, I cannot determine, being a thing to come, as all the rest comprehended under the pouring forth of the seventh vial: But this I am sure of, that Rome shall go down; and there shall be such tumults, uproars, rents, divisions, disputations, and concussions in Rome, and throughout all the Romish jurisdiction, as never were heard of, nor read of since the world began: For St. John addeth, that 'Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath,' Rev. xvi. 19. that is, God doth now at length call to mind all the wrongs done to his people, and all the righteous blood shed for the space of seven or eight hundred years by the whore of Babylon, that he may be fully revenged, and executeth the fierceness of his wrath both upon her and her whole kingdom: yea, and that in such terrible and wrathful manner, that there shall be no place of refuge; no place to fly into for succour: for St. John saith 'Every isle fled

‘ away, and the mountains were not found:’ Rev. xvi. 20. meaning that the papists in that day shall have neither mountain nor island to fly unto.

And last of all, the Holy Ghost saith, that ‘ there fell a great hail like talents out of heaven upon the idolaters; insomuch, that they blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail: for the plague thereof was exceeding great.’ A talent was about the weight of threescore pound, as some write. Then it followeth that this hail of God’s wrath upon the papists shall be most terrible and fearful, and beat them down to the ground, as it were an hail of mill-stones, or plough-irons.— Now when this hail of talents cometh, as assuredly come it shall, then shall the kingdom of popery be beaten to dust and powder: and therefore no wonder though the idolaters, seeing all this, be in a most horrible rage, and blasphemed God, as St. John saith, Rev. xvi. 21. because of this exceeding and most extraordinary plague, which shall then come upon them. But now to conclude, and wind up all together: for as much as this last vial is poured into the air (God saith ‘ It is done,’) an extraordinary earthquake followeth, the great city of Rome is rent, Babylon called into question, and fearful hail-stones of wrath poured down upon the idolaters; I do con-

clude, that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter destruction in this life.

Now let us proceed to further proof. In the eighteen chapter of this book the whore of Babylon saith in heart: 'I sit, being a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and sorrow, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire; for that God which condemneth her is a strong Lord,' Rev. xviii. 8. Isa. xlvi.

First, Here Rome is described as she was in the height and top of her pride and security, when she held the dominion of the kings of the earth, and boasted that she was the head of the catholic church, carrying herself very insolently above all kings and emperors, treading upon their necks, and making them attend at her gates barefoot in the midst of winter, as history report. Yea, and that she was no widow; that is, no solitary or desolate person, but one that had many lovers which were strong to defend her, so as she should feel no want nor see any sorrow. But the time will come, and draweth on apace, wherein she shall be thoroughly punished for her haughtiness, and intolerable pride and security: for the Holy Ghost saith, 'her plagues shall come in one day;' that is, suddenly, shortly, and speedily, even 'death,

‘ sorrow, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire; for that God which condemneth her is a strong Lord.’ If this be not plain enough to prove an utter overthrow of Rome, I know not what can be plain enough. For if death, famine, and fire will not pull her down, I know not what shall pull her down. But St. John saith flatly, that God himself, who is a strong Lord, will oppose himself against Rome, and condemn her. Who can uphold her? Can the king of Spain? Can the cardinals? can the emperor? Can all the dukes of Italy, and all the potentates of the earth that take part with her? No, no, they are all too weak. ‘ For if God take against a man, who can reclaim him, saith the Holy Ghost? For he doth whatsoever he will.’ And again, ‘ God is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who ever hardened his heart against him and prospered? If God call not back his anger, the most proud hearts are bowed under him,’ Job xxiii. And God saith in Ezekiel xxii. ‘ Can thy hands be strong, or can thy heart endure in the day that I shall have to do with thee?’ Then it followeth that though Babylon sit as a queen, and all her lovers take part with her, ye because the strong Lord is against her, therefore she shall come to utter destruction.

Some of good judgment in the truth

have gathered from this place, that the very city of Rome shall be burnt with fire, which assuredly may well be: but this I am sure of, that the phrase of ‘burning with fire,’ Amos v. 6. doth in the prophets always signify an utter destruction and desolation of a city or a kingdom; and therefore it followeth, that Rome shall be utterly destroyed.

But behold yet a stronger and plainer proof. For St. John saith, ‘A mighty angel took up a stone like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, “With such a violence shall that great city Babylon be cast down, and shall be found no more,”’ Rev. xviii. 21. All men know, that old Babylon in Chaldea was destroyed by the Medes and Persians long before St. John wrote this book; and therefore that is not here meant: but the new Babylon, which is Rome, as before hath been proved. The phrases of speech, and the signs which the prophets used to declare the destruction and desolation of old Babylon, are here alluded unto the destruction of Rome. For we read in the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the prophet having written in a book all the evil that should come upon Babel, for holding God’s people so long in most miserable captivity, said to Serajah, ‘When thou comest unto Babel, thou shalt read

‘ all these words, and when thou hast made
‘ an end of reading this book, thou shalt
‘ bind a stone to it, and cast it into the
‘ midst of Euphrates, and shalt say, Thus
‘ shall Babel be drowned; and shall not
‘ rise up from the evil that I will bring
‘ upon her, although they weary them-
‘ selves,’ Jer. li. 61. Now let us consider
how this agreeth with the same which is
here set down, and we shall find, that all
things are here set down with greater force
to express, as it were, a deeper vengeance,
and a more heavy and unrecoverable de-
struction.

First, There is a man; here is a mighty
angel: there the man taketh up a stone;
here the angel taketh a great stone like a
mill-stone: there the stone is cast into the
river; here into the deep sea. All these
circumstances being applied to Rome, do
greatly aggravate the matter, and very
plainly shew, that it shall fall without all
hope of recovery. For the Lord declareth
by this forcible sign of casting a mill-stone
into the sea, that the city and kingdom of
antichrist shall be cast deep down into per-
dition, and shall lie overwhelmed and
drowned in the same for ever.

For if old Babylon was utterly destroyed,
and came to a final desolation in this life;
much more shall Rome, as the Holy Ghost

disputeth: but old Babylon came to utter ruin and desolation in this life, as both Isaiah and Jeremiah do witness: Therefore new Babylon, that is, Rome, shall come to utter destruction: and, as the Holy Ghost here saith, ‘ shall be found no more,’ or shall fall without all hope of recovery.

History do report, that Rome hath been sundry times destroyed by the Goths and Vandals, and others: yea, once fired and quite burnt up; but afterward built and raised up again by the emperors: but here the Holy Ghost saith expressly, that it shall have a final fall, and an unrecoverable destruction. For can a mill-stone cast into the bottom of the sea ever be got up again? No, no, it is impossible. Therefore let the Jesuites and seminary priests do what they can, they shall never set up Rome again, they shall never restore her to her former state and dignity; they shall never repair her credit again. Let the Pope and cardinals, and the king of Spain, and all the world, and all the devils in hell join together, they shall never get up this mill-stone out of the bottom of the sea. For the angel hath cast it in with such violence, that no power of man shall ever fetch it out again.

True it is indeed, that the Jesuites bestir them, and the seminary priests and papists do werk apace in all lands, and adventure

themselves in the most desperate manner to recover again the credit of popery, and to set up again the dignity and the power of the Pope, and the glory of their church and city, and their bold enterprizes do make many even to doubt that they will again one day prevail: but assuredly we are to make full reckoning, that although here and there they may support for a time some ruinous parts of their rotten frame; yet do what they can, it shall in the end fall down upon their heads, and come to utter desolation.

Indeed, Rome standeth yet, and popery is not quite fallen down. But they are disclosed, their credit is cracked, their power decayeth; and so this thing is begun, and the time draweth on when it shall be fully accomplished. He that had beheld the power, the pomp, the riches and estimation of the church of Rome about some four-score years past, and looketh upon it now, shall see a wonderful alteration: It seemed then to be without all danger of shaking: for the emperor, and the kings of the earth stood forth with all their force and might, power and policy to uphold it: but, God be thanked, we see how it is already come down, and shall come down every day more and more, whosoever faith nay to it.

But behold, yet more and more plain proof for the utter desolation of Rome.— For St. John describeth the eternal desolation thereof, by denial of those things which are in cities inhabited;

First, He saith, ‘ there shall be no more any voice of harpers, musicians, pipers and trumpeters heard in Rome,’ Rev. xviii. 22. that is, all music shall surcease, which argueth an utter desolation: for what-inhabited cities are without music?

Secondly, He saith ‘ There shall be no craftsmen of what trade soever found in Rome,’ which argueth an utter desolation; for what flourishing city is without artificers?

Thirdly, He saith, ‘ No light of a candle shall any more shine in Rome,’ which argueth an utter desolation: for what inhabited city is without candles?

Fourthly, He saith, ‘ No sound of a mill-stone shall be heard in Rome,’ which doth argue an utter desolation: for what city is without mills to grind their corn?

Fifthly, He saith, ‘ The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more in Rome,’ which argueth an utter desolation: For what city is without bride and bridegroom? and without marriage for procreation sake? Then I conclude from all this, that Rome shall

fall finally and come to utter destruction.

But behold yet a more plain and pregnant proof, drawn from the pitiful mournings and most woful lamentations of the kings of the earth, the merchants and the mariners, who all do jointly lament and mourn for the destruction and desolation of Rome, crying, ' Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city: for in one hour is thy judgment come: in one hour so great riches are come to desolation in one hour she is made desolate,' Rev. xviii. 10. What can be more plainly and fully spoken to prove an utter desolation to Rome? What can be more required then to have it set down in express terms, as here we see: for now the Holy Ghost useth no figure, no hardness, no circumlocution, no obscurity; but telleth us plainly, and thrice for failing, that Babylon, that is Rome, is made desolate, is to come to desolation.

Moreover, it is said that the kings, merchants and mariners shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, and they shall weep and wail when they shall see the smoak of her burning, Rev. xiv. 10, 15, 18. signifying that the torment and plague of Rome shall be so great, that kings, for all their might, shall not dare to come nigh to rescue her: no, not the

king of Spain with all his great might and power; he shall be fain to stand afar off, or rather utterly to forsake her, weeping and wailing as well as others, for her most fearful and unrecoverable destruction.

But we are to observe in all this, that the Holy Ghost useth a figure or kind of speech, which they call a *prosopopœia*, or feigning of a person, whereby the popish kings being dead and rotten, are brought in lamenting and bewailing the fall of Babylon, as if they were alive again: or else it may be understood of cardinals and legates, which are even as kings upon the earth. But it cannot be understood of Christian kings, for they shall be the instruments of God to pull down great Babylon, as we shall hear by and by.

Furthermore, let us consider the causes of this great lamentation for the deadly downfall of Babylon, by the popish kings, merchants and mariners.

First, The kings, they mourn and lament, faith St. John, because they 'had committed fornication with the great whore of Babylon, and lived in pleasure with her,' Rev. xviii. 9. that is, they have lived long with her in abominable idolatry, and pleased her that way, and therefore she gave them dispensations to live in wantonness and all carnal pleasures, and even to

do what they list, spending their days in sensuality, and all kind of fleshly delights.

Secondly, The merchants do weep and wail, because no man buyeth their ware any more, Rev. xviii. 12, 13, 14. These merchants are not named, but they may easily be known by their wares, which the Holy Ghost describeth, to wit, that they be the popish merchants, the shaven merchants, who are here brought in mourning and lamenting for the loss of their gain. The monks, friars, and priests cannot have that utterance of their wares that in times past they have had; their wares are now out of request: their markets wax dead and they have cold takings. When these fellows pass by the great monasteries and abbeys, and see them made ruinous heaps, and withall remember the fat revenues, the good cheer, the pleasure and delight which sometimes they have had in those places, it cuts their hearts, and maketh them shake, their heads at it, saying, ' Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and gilded with gold, and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour so great riches are come to desolation,' Rev. xviii. 16, 17. Mark then, that the ruin of their great city, with all the pomp, pleasure and riches thereof, is that which doth yet stick in their stomachs.

Thirdly, The mariners do greatly mourn and lament for the loss of their profit and commodity. For while Rome had dominion over the kingdoms, and the Pope ruled over all, even as God upon the earth, there was nothing but trudging over the seas to Rome out of all lands, and again from thence: there was carrying and re-carrying; insomuch, that multitudes of mariners and ship-masters were continually set on work, and gained greatly thereby. No wonder than though these mariners are brought in amongst other friends of Rome, bewailing her destruction, even with dust upon their heads, weeping, and crying, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city wherein were made rich all that had ships on the sea by her costliness: for in one hour she is made desolate.' Thus we see how the kings, and merchants, and mariners shall bewail the utter ruin and great desolation of Rome, the loss of their pleasure, their gain, and their profit.

Moreover, we are to observe, that that which is spoken by the old prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, as touching the utter desolation of old Babel, is applied by St. John to new Babel, which is Rome. Touching the eastern Babylon, the prophet saith thus: 'Babel, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty and pride of the Chaldeans, shall be as

‘the destruction of God in Sodom and Go-morrah. It shall not be inhabited for ever, neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. But Zion shall lodge there, and their houses shall be full of ohim: ostriches shall dwell there, and the satyrs shall dance there,’ Isa. xiii. 19, 20, 21. that is, fairies, hobgoblins, night-spirits, and such like; whereby is signified the utter desolation of old Babylon. Now St. John applieth all this to Rome, saying, Babylon, that great city, ‘is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of all foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.’ noting hereby both the filthiness of Rome, and also her utter desolation.

But now let us proceed to our last and greatest arguement, to prove the final fall and utter destruction of Rome and all Romish power and authority. In the 49th chapter of this prophecy our Lord Jesus is described ‘sitting upon his white horse, which is the ministry of the gospel, as hath before been proved, and is most gloriously brought in by St. John, as grand captain and general of the field, fighting with all his army against antichrist and his soldiers. St. John giveth him goodly names and titles, calling him the Word of God, the

King of kings, and the Lord of lords: and faith, that he hath a name written that no man knew but himself; which is his infinite glory and majesty, Rev. xix. 12, 13, 14, &c.

And moreover, that his eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head many crowns, and a sharp sword in his mouth, and clothed with his warlike garment dipt in blood, and all his heavenly soldiers followed him upon white horses: meaning thereby all Christian kings, dukes, lords, nobles, captains, preachers and professors of true religion.

This grand Captain, with all these worthy soldiers, faith St. John, shall muster together, and prepare themselves to fight against the beast, and the false prophet, and all their forces; and at last he seeth them join battle. 'I saw (faith St. John) the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make battle against him that sat upon the white horse, and against his army,' Rev. xix. 19.

Now all this is to be understood of the battles betwixt the papists and the protestants in these last days. But, may some man say, Who shall have the victory?—What is the success? What is the issue? Let us hear of that. The Holy Ghost answerveth, that 'the beast and the false prophet

‘were taken, foiled, and overcome;’ using a warlike phrase, because in the wars they use to take their greatest captains and commanders alive, and to put them to their ransoms. The like unto this we have in the seventh chapter, where St. John telleth us, that when the popish kings and poten-tates shall make war against Christ and his gospel, they shall have the like success unto this, for saith he, ‘These have one mind, and shall give their power and au-thority unto the beast, they shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall over-come them; for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings,’ Rev. xvii. 13, 14.

But, may some man say, When the leaders and commanders of the popish ar-mies shall be taken captives and set at their ransoms, what shall become of the inferior captains and soldiers? The Holy Ghost an-swereth, that ‘the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sitteth upon the horse;’ that is, they were put to the sword, and all the fowls were filled full with their flesh. And for this cause St. John saith, that he saw an angel stand in the sun, who cried with a loud voice, say-ing to all the fowls that did fly by the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves to-gether unto the supper of the great God.

Now, to make this plain: we know, that

they which proclaim any matter, seek some market-cross, or high place to stand in, where they may be heard: so this angel, which proclaimeth the victory against antichrist, before any stroke be strucken, because of the certainty of it, standeth in the sun, as it were in the theatre and midst of the world, as in a place most fit for the purpose, that he may be heard throughout all the earth. Now this proclamation is directed to all the fowls of the air, to bid them to a supper, which is here called the supper of the great God. But it may be demanded, What cheer shall they have? The Holy Ghost answereth, that they shall eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of great captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of horsemen, and the flesh of all free-men, and bond-men and of small and great.

This we know, that when men are slain in great numbers in the wars, their bodies lie scattered as meat for the fowls of the air. And therefore here all the fowls are invited and bidden to a great supper made them by the great God, whose hand is in all this; their cheer and their dainties, are reckoned up to be the flesh of kings and captains, &c. Now out of this may be strongly concluded, that hereafter in all time to come, when the armies of the Pope,

which is the beast; the armies of the king of Spain, who hath given his power and authority unto the beast, and is his great upholder; when the armies of the Cardinal, his great confederate; when the armies of the leaguers, his great adherents; yea, when all these, and all other popish armies, shall join and band themselves together against the Christian kings, and defenders of the gospel, they shall have a notable overthrow; insomuch that their dead carcasses shall even cover the earth, and the fowls of the air shall come to their great supper, which the Lord of hosts will make ready for them. For assuredly, and out of doubt, they that live shall see the fulfilling of all this, and shall see the popish armies go down by heaps in all countries and kingdoms, and be made meat for the fowls of the air. For the Holy Ghost saith, 'They shall come to Armageddon; that is, the place where their armies shall be destroyed. And again, 'If any lead into captivity: he shall go into captivity: if any kill with a sword, he must be killed with a sword,' Rev. xiii. 10. For as the popish forces have in former times taken captive the people of God, and cruelly murdered them: so now the time draweth on apace, wherein themselves shall be taken and put to the sword.

And therefore now at last I conclude,

that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter destruction in this life. For as Rome did rise up by degrees in this life, so Rome shall fall by degrees in this life: as Rome grew up to her full height and highest pitch in this life, so it shall come to her lowest ebb and greatest declination in this life: I mean before the coming of Christ unto judgment. For the falling down of hail like talents upon the kingdom of the beast, shall be in this life: The extraordinary earthquake upon the dominions of anti-christ shall be in this life: The coming of the popish armies to Armageddon shall be in this life: The mourning of the kings, merchants, and mariners for the overthrow of Babylon shall be in this life: The great battle betwixt the beast and him that fitteth upon the white horse, shall be in this life, before the day of judgment: The pouring forth of all the seven vials of God's wrath upon the kingdom of the beast shall be even in this life. For it were an absurd thing to say, any of these things shall be after this life; or to say that these things shall not be till the very coming of Christ; for, they are all things to be effected here in this earth: and the Holy Ghost doth describe them as things to be done upon the face of the earth: for otherwise we could have small comfort in any of these things.

if they should not be done here in earth, or if they should all be deferred till the very coming of Christ, and in the mean time antichrist shall prevail.

But it will be objected, that St. Paul saith, 'The Lord shall consume antichrist with the spirit of his mouth, and abolish him with the brightness of his coming,' 2 Thes. ii. 8. Therefore before his coming he shall not be utterly abolished. True it is indeed, he shall not utterly be cut off in all his members, till the very coming of Christ; for there will be some papists remaining in all countries, even unto the end; there be some, nay, many, that will carry the beast's mark even until the last day. But the Holy Ghost in this prophecy speaketh of the revolting and falling away of kingdoms and countries from the see of Rome; whereby it shall come to pass, that it shall be exceedingly weakened, and brought so low, that the kings of the earth shall easily take it; or, as the Holy Ghost speaketh, shall easily pass over their Euphrates being dried up, and enter their Babylon. But then, will some man say, Shall there be no Pope at all a little before the coming of Christ? I answer, and not I, but the Holy Ghost for me; he shall be a poor Pope, a naked Pope, a desolate Pope, a Pope whose flesh shall be torn, whose flesh shall wither, as

we shall hear by and by. He shall be such a Pope, as Ishbosheth was a king, when Abner and all Israel fell away from him.—He shall be such a Pope as the king of Portugal is a king.

But it will be objected, How know you this? are you a prophet? can you foretell of things to come? I answer, St. John was a prophet, and indued with a prophetical spirit in this matter of his visions and revelations; and I speak no more than St. John hath set down. And therefore I hope I speak within my compass: for I do but relate St. John's words, and explain them in such measure as I am able.

This prophecy doth plainly declare, that Babylon shall fall, Rome shall come down, the Pope shall never be esteemed again: and I do believe it to be so; I believe God, I believe his word, I believe all that is spoken in scripture, and I do endeavour to persuade others also. For since the Holy Ghost hath so plainly and so fully foretold it, why should we not believe it? why are we so slow to believe all that is written in the scriptures? hath God spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? shall any jot of his word fail? shall we think he jesteth with us, when he doth so often and so seriously tell us of the downfall of Rome? Surely, surely, the cause why men are not

fully persuaded of the final fall of Rome, is, because they do not diligently peruse this book of the Revelation: But let them be studious and diligent in this book, and they shall be out of all doubt, that Rome is the great whore of Babylon, that the Pope is antichrist, and the papacy the beast.

But now, me thinketh, I hear some men say, How is it like that popery shall fall down more and more here among us, since it hath so many friends, backers and up-holders, and seemeth to gather strength, and make an head again? I answer, that all is but a lightning before death. I answer, that all is but the stopping of a water-brook, or making a dam overthwart it, which will cause it to swell more, and to break over with great violence. I answer, that all is no more than is fore-told, that the Jesuites shall come forth like frogs out of their puddles and marsh grounds, and keep a croaking for a time, till they have croaked their own destruction and many others. For they shall never set popery here in England, to stand and continue, do what they can. I must needs confess, that our sins being so horrible and outrageous as they are, and being grown to such an height and ripeness, do deserve some fearfull vengeance, and that God hath a

just controversy against us, as sometimes he had against Israel, because ' There was ' no mercy, nor truth, nor knowledge of ' God in the land: but swearing, lying, ' killing, stealing, and whoring, and blood ' toucheth blood, and therefore saith God, ' the land shall mourn,' &c. Hos. iv. 3, 4. But yet I hope for his covenant sake, for his great mercies sake, for his names sake, for his glory's sake, and for his church's sake, he will be gracious and favourable unto us, and not bring upon us that vengeance which our sins have deserved: or at least, wise though he correct us, as indeed he hath just cause, and we may justly fear it; yet he will do it in mercy for our amendment, and not in wrath to our destruction; as he saith by his prophet, ' I ' will not utterly destroy thee, but I will ' correct thee by judgment, and not utterly ' cut thee off,' Jer. xxx. 11. and xlvi. 18. and x. 24. But whosoever it shall please the most wise God to deal with us, yet this I say, and am persuaded of, that popery shall never be established again in this kingdom: my reason is, because the everlasting gospel carried abroad by the angel that flieth in the midst of heaven, shall spread still more and more throughout all the kingdoms of Europe, as appeareth Rev. xiv. ver. 6. for otherwise how shall

Rome fall? how shall the Jews ever be converted? how shall fire come down from heaven, and devour both Gog and Magog, as the Holy Ghost fore-telleth shall come to pass, and as we shall hear more by and by. Moreover, St. John telleth us plainly, that 'In these last days the gospel shall be preached to many people, and nations, and tongues, and to many kings.' And further he saith, that in this age wherein we live, 'many shall renounce idolatry, repent, and give glory to the God of heaven.' But some man may say, how prove you that this kingdom is one of them which St. John speaketh of, and which he meaneth, wherein the gospel shall be preached unto the end of the world? I answer, that it is proved out of the seventeenth chapter of this prophecy, where the Holy Ghost telleth us flatly, that those ten kingdoms of Europe which had a long time been the ten horns and strength of the beast, and being of one mind, had given their power and authority unto the beast, should now in these last days rise up against the whore of Babylon, make war against her, hate her, and make her desolate.'

But this kingdom is one of those ten horns, and one of those ten kingdoms which a long time had given her power and authority to the beast. Therefore as this

kingdom hath happily begun to hate the whore, and to make her desolate and naked; so undoubtedly she shall continue unto the end of the world. For if this kingdom, and other kingdoms which now hate the whore, do continue, how shall she be made desolate and naked, &c.? Then it should seem, the beast shall revive and recover himself again, and so St. John shall be found a false prophet. But 'God is true, and all men are liars;' and St. John shall be found a true prophet: and therefore these kingdoms of Europe which have begun to hate the whore, shall continue, and never give her over, till (as the Holy Ghost saith) 'they have eaten her flesh, and burnt her with fire;' that is, till they have utterly devoured her. But here it will be objected, that in the latter days iniquity shall have the upper hand. I answer, first, I find no such place in scripture. But this I find, that our Lord Jesus foretelleth his disciples, that very shortly after his death and resurrection, many seducers and false teachers should arise, which should deceive many, and draw them away from the love of the gospel, 'and, (saith he) because iniquity shall be increased, the love of many shall be cold,' Matth. xxiv. 12. But this speech of our Saviour doth not properly concern our times: but yet

it must needs be granted, that the wicked shall wax worse and worse, and the world shall not amend, but still be worse and worse, and grow to a greater height and ripeness of sin; as appeareth in this prophecy. Yet for all this, we must note withal; that the number of true believers in those last days shall be very many, as this book doth also teach. But it may be objected, how can this gear stand together, that in the last days there shall be multitudes and millions of reprobates, and most wicked and abominable persons, and yet withal a great increase of true believers? I answer, that the world will be always like itself, impious and unbelieving. But the church shall purely worship God, and that with daily encreasing even unto the end. But now, me thinketh, I hear some man say, What likelihood is there of all this which you write touching the overthrow of Rome? Do we not see that Rome is yet strong? Doth not Italy, Spain, the greatest part of France, and Netherland, and Germany stand for her defence? Hath not the whore still many and great bearers and upholders? What likelihood is there then that ever she shall be brought so low as you speak of? I answer, that in this case we must not ask the question, What likelihood? We must not consult with flesh and

blood: we must not take counsel of human reason: for God is marvellous in his devices, and when he hath once decreed and determined of any future event, he will compass it by means far surpassing all human reach and capacity; yea, by such plots and devices, as man's wit could never have once dreamed of. For he hath all means in heaven and earth in his hands, and is admirable in all his proceedings: and therefore we may not ask this question What likelihood, or how can it be, or how can it possibly come to pass? What likelihood was there a hundred years past, when Rome was in her delight, and all the kingdoms of Europe stood for her, that ever she should have been forsaken of so many of her old friends, as at this day she is? What likelihood was there, that when the Pope could command the emperor, and all the kings of Europe, and their kingdoms, that ever he should have been brought so low as at this day he is, God be thanked? What likelihood was there that ever poor Martin Luther should stand out with the everlasting gospel in his mouth against the Pope, emperor, and as it were, the whole world, and yet die in his bed in a good old age? What likelihood was there that king Henry the VIII. of famous memory, should renounce Rome,

oppose himself against the Pope, and suppress the abbeys, priories, and monasteries in this kingdom, and take their lands and livings into his own hands? Therefore I conclude, that when God hath decreed the utter overthrow of Rome, we must not ask this question, How can it be? or which way shall it be brought about? For the scriptures do teach, that God in all ages hath done the greatest exploits, either by himself alone without means, also by weak means, or contrary to all means.

By himself, without means; ' he overthrew the Moabites, Ammorites, and them of Mount Seir, which made war against good king Jehoshaphat,' 2 Chron. xx. 1.

By himself ' he destroyed Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,' Exod. xiv. 21, 22, 23, 24, &c.

By himself ' he overthrew Jericho that great city,' Josh. vi. 8, &c.

By himself ' he slew the huge army of the Assyrians that made war against Hezekiah,' 2 Kings xix. 35, &c.

By himself ' he smote the great and dreadful army of the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah,' 2 Chron. xiv. 9, 10, &c.

By himself ' he smote the Asyrians, which besieged Dotham, the city where the prophet Elisha was,' 2 Kings vi. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, &c.

By weak means ‘ he overthrew the innumerable army of the Midianites, even by Gideon’s three hundred,’ 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2, 3, &c.

By weak means ‘ he slew a garrison of the Philistines, even by Jonathan and his armour-bearer,’ 1 Sam. xiv. 1, 2, &c.

By weak means ‘ he overthrew the kings of Sodom, and thereabouts, even by Abraham and his family,’ Gen. xiv. 14, 15, 16, &c.

‘ He overthrew Goliah by David: Sisera by Jael: Abimelech by a woman,’ 1 Sam. xvii. 4, 5, 6.—Judges iv. 4, 5.—Judges vi. 1, 2, 3, &c.

Contrary to means, ‘ he saved the three children from burning, being in the fire,’ Dan. iii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Contrary to means, ‘ he saved Jonas from drowning, being cast into the sea,’ Jonah ii. 1, 2, 3, &c.

Contrary to means, ‘ he preserved Daniel from devouring, being cast into the lions’ den,’ Dan. vi. 10, 11, 12, &c.

Contrary to means, ‘ he kept the Israelites from drowning being in the bottom of the sea,’ Exod. xiv. 21, 22. &c.

Contrary to means and all expectation, ‘ he caused the sun to stand still at noon day, whilst he overthrew the five kings of Canaan by Joshua,’ Josh. x. 12, &c.

Therefore I conclude, that forasmuch as God in all ages hath effected the most strange and admirable things, either by himself without means, or by very weak means, or contrary to all means; therefore it is in vain to ask this question, how, or by what means shall Rome be destroyed? For it is enough for us to know that it shall be destroyed, and come to utter desolation. And in my judgment the Holy Ghost hath so often and plainly affirmed this, that no man should any more make any doubt of it, or once call it into question. For what can be more plain, than to say, 'Rome is fallen: Rome shall fall. Great hail-stones like talents shall fall upon it. It shall go perdition. It shall fall to destruction. It shall be cast down like a great mill-stone into the bottom of the sea. It shall be burnt with fire. It shall be made desolate and naked. It shall be without inhabitants.' All the popish sort, both high and low, 'shall with great mourning and lamenting bewail the desolation thereof. Their armies shall come to Armageddon.' The beast and the false prophet shall be taken, and their captains and soldiers slain by infinite heaps, and their carcasses made meat for the fowls of the air?' If all this be not plain enough, I cannot tell what can be plain enough.

True it is indeed, the Holy Ghost doth not name Rome; but it is apparent by the circumstances, that all these places must needs be understood of Rome, of Romish power, and of the Romish armies. For there can no other found sense be given of them, as all divine writers and interpreters do affirm, both new and old. And therefore I conclude, that St. John in this prophecy could not speak more plainly, except he should have named Rome; for he nameth Babylon; he nameth 'the great city which then reigned over the kings of the earth;' he nameth 'the city situate upon seven hills;' he nameth 'the city which had seven several governments:' And therefore out of all doubt he meaneth Rome. Well then, since it is so, that Rome, and all Romish power and authority shall fall flat down, and come to utter destruction and desolation in this life, let all men take heed how they join with Rome, how they join with the Romish church, and how they receive the beasts mark: for assuredly they shall be destroyed together, both in this life and that which is to come, as we shall hear by and by.

Let all the wise men therefore, and all such as have any care of their salvation, follow the wholesome counsel and advice of the Holy Ghost, which saith, 'Go out of her my people, that ye be not partak-

‘ers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins are come up to heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities,’ Rev. xviii. 4, 5. Our only wisdom then will be to separate ourselves from the whore of Babylon, that is, from the church of Rome, and to join ourselves with all speed unto the church of God; that is the church of the Protestants; for this shall stand and flourish, the other shall fall down and perish.

But what then, shall we be sorry for the fall of Babylon, and the ruin of Rome? No, no, the Holy Ghost counselleth us greatly to rejoice in her destruction and overthrow, saying, ‘ O heavens rejoice over her, and ye holy apostles and prophets, because God hath given you judgment on her,’ Rev. xviii. 20. We are therefore to be so far from mourning and lamenting for the desolation of Rome, the kings, merchants, mariners, and other friends, as that it ought to be the very joy and rejoicing of our hearts: For St. John saith, that not only the holy angels, prophets, apostles and martyrs shall rejoice at the destruction of Rome; but also all the saints, and all the whole body of the church. And therefore he saith, that after the utter overthrow of Rome, ‘ He heard a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying,

‘ Hallelujah, that is, praise ye the Lord; for he hath condemned the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants shed by her hand,’ Rev. xix.

1, 2, And again, saith St. John, they said, ‘ Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah,’ thrice together, thereby expressing the great joy and thanksgiving for the destruction and overthrow of the great whore: and even so ought all that love God, that love the church, and that love the truth, greatly to rejoice in the destruction of Rome, because this monster shall no longer oppress the Israel of God. And sure it is, that the more zealous and godly that a man is, the more he will rejoice at the destruction of popery: for a man cannot love God and his church, that doth not laugh in the destruction of that antichristian and bloody kingdom. Let no man here say, This is cruelty, this is want of charity, and want of pity, to laugh at the destruction of any, or to rejoice at other mens harms. But the most wise God saith, ‘ Reward her even as she rewarded you, and give her double according to her works; and in the cup that she hath filled to you, fill her the double. In as much as she glorified herself, and lived in pleasure, so much give ye to her torment and

‘sorrow,’ Rev. viii. 6, 5. And therefore I affirm, that no man ought to be moved with any compassion or pity for the overthrow of Rome: but herein that saying of the prophet is true: ‘Blessed is he that taketh and dasheth her children against the stones,’ Psalm cxlvii. 9. And again, ‘Bend thy bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the Lord,’ Jer. i. 14. Moreover we are to observe, that forasmuch as the Lord will-eth and commandeth all men to reward Rome as she hath rewarded us, and to give her double according to her works, therefore we ought every one of us, as much as in him lieth, and as his calling will bear, to do his uttermost to pull down Rome; the magistrate by the sword, the minister by the word, and the people by their prayers. For even Christian kings and princes, and all the nobles of the earth must not be negligent to fight against Rome: For herein that saying is true, ‘Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently, and cursed is he that keepeth back his sword from blood,’ Jer. xlvi. 10. For this cause I do, upon my knees, night and day most humbly and instantly entreat the God of heaven, that as he hath put into the heart of our most gracious and excellent king to hate the whore

of Babylon, and to be his greatest instrument in the whole world for the weakening and overturning of Rome, and the defence of his most glorious gospel (which is his crown and glory in all the churches, and his great renown in all Christian kingdoms) so he may constantly continue, and never cease drawing out the sword of justice, till he have utterly rooted out of his dominions all the cursed crew of popish **Jebusites**, and all such as have received the **beast's** mark, and especially the **Jesuites** and **seminary priests**, which are the devil's brockers, the Pope's agents, and the king of Spain's factors in all kingdoms. Here also I most humbly, even upon my knees, with dropping eyes, yea, if it were possible, with tears of blood, beseech and entreat the learned and reverend fathers of our church, that they would bend all their power and authority, with all their might and main against the Romish strumpet; and the rather, because in these days she seemeth to make a head again, having so many and great favourers, that she and her accomplices dare perk with their nebs, and very boldly and confidently prate of a toleration.

Here also I do most humbly and earnestly entreat all my learned and godly brethren, the ministers and preachers

of this church of England, that in all their public teachings and private proceedings, they would make strong opposition against Rome, and Romish religion. And I beseech the God of gods, that we may all join together with united forces, to march on valiantly against the armies of antichrist, and to spread the everlasting gospel far and near, to the utter overturning and beating down of this western Babylon; and that whosoever we may amongst ourselves differ in judgment in some things, yet that there might be no breach of love, nor alienation of affection amongst us, but that we may all go together hand in hand, and arm in arm to preach God's everlasting truth, and to set ourselves against the common adversaries. For if that we will not set ourselves against them, yet they will be sure to set themselves against us. And thus much concerning the third main point, which is the final fall and destruction of Rome, even in this world.

Now it followeth to speak of the fourth main point; which is, by whom, and when Rome shall be overthrown. But for the better understanding of this point, concerning the persons that shall overthrow Rome, we are to observe, that St. John describeth the whore of Babylon sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, having

‘ seven heads and ten horns,’ Rev. xvii. 4. whereby is meant the Roman monarchy, as hath been shewed before. After this the angel expoundeth unto John, what the heads and horns of the beast mean, and saith, that ‘ the ten horns are ten kings, or kingdoms, which yet have not received a kingdom, but shall receive power as kings, at an hour with the beast.’ Rev. xvii. 12.

The sense is, that these ten kingdoms had not received such power and authority under the emperors, as they should under the Popes, for there was great difference in these kingdoms under the Popes, from that which they had been under the emperors. For they received far greater power, and they carried another mind toward the papacy, then the nations did before toward the empire: for they did submit themselves to the papacy for conscience and love, even as to the holy church, which they never did to the empire.

And this is the reason why the Holy Ghost saith, ‘ They had not received a kingdom, but should receive power as kings at an hour with the beast.’ Which is not to be understood simply, but after a sort; for they had received kingdoms under the emperors, but not in such sort as

afterward they did under the Popes. For the Roman monarchy under the dominion of the Popes was in his greatest height and altitude, and the kings of Europe grew up together with the papacy in power, might, and dominion. And St. John add-
eth, that 'these ten kings or kingdoms
' were all of one mind, and did give their
' power and authority unto the beast.' Rev.
xvii. 13: that is, they did with might and
main labour to uphold the Babylonical
strumpet. But the angel telleth John
flatly, that the ten horns, that is, the ten
kingdoms of the empire, which before
had given their names, their power, and
authority to the beast, to uphold her and
defend her, should now in these last days
all change their minds, and turn against
her. For, saith the angel to John, 'The
' ten horns which thou sawest upon the
beast, are they which shall hate the
whore, and make her desolate, and ne-
ced, and shall eat up her flesh, and burn
her with fire.' Rev. xvii. 36. Here then
it doth plainly appear, who they be that
shall overthrow Rome, and by whom it
shall be destroyed: to wit, by the ten kings
of Europe, or kingdoms of Europe,
which some very learned do reckon up
to be these, England, Scotland, Germany,
France, Spain, Denmark, Switzerland,

Poland, Russia, and Hungary. *St. John's words are plain, that these kingdoms which took part with the beast, shall take against her, and pull her down: But we know, that all the kingdoms of Europe did take part with her: Therefore it followeth, that all the kingdoms of Europe shall take against her. And therefore it is very probable, that in time † France, Spain, and Italy shall turn against the beast. We know that the rest of the kingdoms are already turned against the beast, and the beast hath lost seven of his horns, the eighth, which is France, beginneth to be somewhat loose, and to shake a little, which if it fall off, the rest will follow after apace. The reason why the kingdoms which were subject to the Roman empire are compared to horns, is, because that as horns are the strength and defence of a beast, wherewith also he pusheth down other creatures; so the strength and defence of the Roman empire and the papacy was in the kingdoms which were subject unto them, and

* If the Holy Ghost by the ten horns do not mean a definite number, that is, just ten: yet assuredly he meaneth all the kingdoms of Europe, and whatsoever else did uphold the beast.

† It is probable, that France, Spain, and Italy shall forsake the whore.

took part with them; whereby also they did mightily push at other nations and kingdoms.

Moreover, we are to observe, that whereas St. John saith, the same horns which did uphold and defend the whore, shall pull her down; it is not to be understood of the same men, but of their successors in the same kingdoms. For the king of England, Scotland, Denmark, Polonia, and other countries, which gave their power and authority unto the beast, are dead and gone. And if we respect the persons of men, those which succeed them now in these kingdoms, and pull down the whore, are other persons; but because they succeed, and govern in these kingdoms, they are said to be those ten horns of the beast. Then thus it is; these ten kings which now hate the harlot, are called the ten horns of the beast, not because they be any defence and strength unto him, but because they sit upon the same thrones of their ancestors: which did uphold and maintain him. But this one thing is very clear and apparent out of the interpretation of the angel, that the same kingdoms which have maintained popery, shall put it down, as we see already fulfilled in England, Scotland, Denmark and the rest which have embraced the gospel. And it

is very likely, that the other kingdoms which as yet have not embraced the gospel, shall in God's good time embrace it. For this seemeth unto me to be a very good argument, taken from the words of the interpreting angel: those ten kingdoms which have upheld Rome, shall pull down Rome: But France, Spain, and Italy have upheld, and do uphold Rome: Therefore France, Spain, and Italy shall pull down Rome. To this may be added for confirmation, that 'the everlasting gospel shall be preached in these last days to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' Rev. xiv. 6. Which I understand of all the nations of Europe which were subject to the Roman empire and the papacy.

And further, that the Holy Ghost saith, that the preachers of the gospel from Luther's time, shall publish God's truth among people, and nations, and tongues, and many kings: which I understand as before.

I am not ignorant that some good divines make it doubtful whether Rome shall be overthrown by the kings of Europe only, or by the Turk also, and the kings of the east. For mine own part, I dare not resolutely determine of it, being a thing to come, but the event shall declare, and they that live shall one day see it. It may be the Turk and the eastern princes may

have some hand in this business: for the Roman monarchy did stretch far that way when it was in his highest elevation. But that which is alledged of ‘the drying up of the waters of Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared,’ Rev. xvi. 11. proved nothing; because it is an allusion to Darius and Cyrus, which were kings of the east, and took old Babylon, by drying up the waters of Euphrates, and leading over their armies, as we have heard before. I do thus then resolve and conclude, that the Turk and the eastern kings may happily have some stroke in this work: but it seemeth most probable unto me, that the kings of Europe shall be the greatest agents in this action. For the words are plain, that the kings of the earth which sometimes were subject to that monstrous beast, should now at last shake off the yoke of her servitude, and withdraw the obedience of their subjects from her, ‘and shall hate, and abhor the harlot of Rome, and should make her desolate,’ by withdrawing their subjects from her obedience; ‘and naked,’ by spoiling her of her treasures; ‘and shall eat her flesh, and tear her in pieces,’ for very hatred; ‘and burn her with fire,’ Rev. xvii. 1. that is, bring her to utter destruction.

So that she which before at her pleasure might command all princes to begin war, to cease from war, to defend her quarrels, and to annoy her enemies, now is glad to flatter a few seduced princes to take her part, that she be not utterly forsaken of all men whatsoever: Or else to practise by treason and treachery, suborning the Jesuites, those rogues and vagabonds, to stir up tumults amongst the people, and to trouble godly estates and commonwealths that despise her dominion; but assuredly without all hope ever to recover her ancient tyranny. But here it may be objected, that the preaching of the gospel is the greatest and strongest means to overthrow Babylon. And therefore how can it be done by the Christian princes? I answer, that it is true indeed, that of all other means, the gospel is the strongest; but the thing is this: If the gospel being sent abroad, shall detect and discover the whore of Rome, and all her abominable doctrine and filthiness, which the Christian princes espying, shall renounce her, make war upon her, and slay in the field thousand thousands of her soldiers, as we heard before. And hitherto concerning the persons that shall overthrow Rome.

Now it followeth to speak of the time when it shall be destroyed: which of all

the rest is a thing most hard to be decided: For the Holy Ghost saith, ' Why should not the times be hid of the Almighty; so as those which know him, should not foresee the times appointed of him?' Job xxiv. 1. And again, ' the words are closed and sealed up, until the time determined.' Dan. xiii. 9. And again, ' It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put into his own power,' Acts i. 7. Yet even in this point I will, by God's assistance, set down so much as is revealed, and so much as God hath given me to see. *1st*, I do confess that God in his word hath set down a just period, and precise determination of all the greatest afflictions and persecutions that ever came to his church before the coming of his Son in the flesh, for the comfort thereof; as that of Egypt, after the expiration of four hundred and thirty years: that of Babylon, after the date of seventy years: that of the Medes and Persians, after the determination of a hundred and thirty years: that of Alexander's state, after six years: that of Magog and Egypt, after 249 years. So likewise that of Christ's death and resurrection after seventy sevens, or seventy weeks, which make 490 years, as the angel Gabriel foretold unto the prophet Daniel. But concerning the just period and precise

determinations of the persecutions of the church since Christ, by the Roman empire and the papacy, we find not the like set down: and hereof there may be two reasons yielded.

First, because the church of the Jews was not under so clear and precious promises as we are, therefore it was needful, for the better strengthening of their hope, and comfort in afflictions, that they should know the very time determined: but because the church of the Christians liveth under most clear and comfortable promises of deliverance, therefore God according to his deep wisdom would have our faith exercised in an assured expectation of the accomplishment thereof, though the precise time be concealed. Another reason may be this: the utter overthrow of Rome falleth out to be but a little before the coming of Christ to judgment, as appeareth in this prophecy. Now then, if we knew the day or year certainly when Rome should fall finally, it would give us too much light unto the knowledge of the last day, which God in great wisdom hath of purpose hid from the knowledge of all men, yea, and of angels. I know right well, that a certain learned writer doth precisely determine the utter destruction of Rome to fall out in the year of our

Lord 1639. But by the favour of so excellent a man be it spoken, I see no sufficient ground thereof. But touching this matter, of the time of Rome's final fall, I will deliver mine own opinion, and my reasons, submitting myself to the judgment of the learned: for I would be loath in this or any other thing to go beyond my compass, or pass the bounds of modesty and humility; and therefore do refer all to be tried by the shekel of the sanctuary.

I do therefore thus judge, that the utter overthrow of Rome shall be in this age, I mean within the age of man: my reason is this, we in this age live under the opening of the seventh seals, the blowing of the sixth trumpet, and the pouring forth of the sixth vial. For the first, it is manifest, because the opening of the seventh seal containeth all things that shall fall out to the end of the world: as hath hath been proved and shewed before. For the blowing of the sixth trumpet, that is also plain, because under the blowing thereof the little book was opened, and the gospel preached, as we see in this age. For the pouring down of the sixth vial of God's wrath, that also is most clear, because thereupon the great river Euphrates dieth up, and the Jesuites, are sent out

to solicit the kings of the earth to battle against the church, as we see fulfilled in these our days. Then I reason thus, Rome must fall down finally in that age wherein the little book is opened, and the everlasting gospel preached: but in this age the little book is opened, and the everlasting gospel preached: therefore in this age Rome must fall down finally. And again, I reason thus, Rome must fall down finally in that age wherein the river Euphrates, that is, the fortification of Rome drieth up, and the Jesuites are sent forth to stop the leak thereof: but all this falleth out in this age, as we see with our eyes: Therefore in this age Rome shall fall down finally. The reason of the proposition is, for in this age the popish armies shall come to Armageddon.

Moreover, this I say, and not I, but the Lord, when the seventh angel bloweth the seventh trumpet, then cometh the end of the world: but the sixth angel hath sounded the sixth trumpet long ago, as appeareth by the effects: therefore it cannot be long ere the seventh angel blow: but Rome must fall down finally before the seventh angel blow, as hath been shewed before: therefore the utter fall of Rome cannot be long deferred.

I do not determine either of day, month
Numb. II. H h

or year, because it is not revealed. But I guess at an age, because the Holy Ghost pointeth us unto an agent.

But all these things I set down for the comfort of God's church, not desiring to understand above that which is meet to understand: but to understand according to sobriety.

Now it resteth to speak of the last main point, which is the causes of Rome's utter ruin and overthrow: which first of all are set down four several times for failing, because 'she made all nations drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication.'

They which outwardly make others drunk, or commit fornication with others, are worthy to be severely punished.

How much sorer punishment are they worthy of which do the same spiritually? and therefore woe be to Rome,

Another cause of the destruction of Rome is, for that she hath shed the blood of all the prophets, martyrs, and saints, as it is written, 'In thee was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.' What is he worthy to have that is a most cruel blood-sucker? nay, what is he worthy to have that shall murder a king's children? yea, that shall murder his eldest son, and heir apparent to the crown?

But Rome hath murdered thou
the King of heavens children: yea,
hath murdered the great heir of he
and earth, I mean the very son of G
(for Christ was put to death by the Roma
power and authority, and by a Roman
judge, as before have been shewed:) There-
fore let all men judge what Rome is wor-
thy to have. Moreover, St. John telleth
us, that 'Rome with her enchantments
hath deceived all nations.' Then let the
matter be referred to the judgment of any
indifferent man, to determine and set down
what punishment sorcerers and inchanter
are worthy of; especially spiritual sorcerers
and inchanter. Besides all this, the Ho-
ly Ghost saith, that 'Rome is the habita-
tion of devils, and the hold of all foul
spirits, and a cage of every unclean and
'hateful bird.' What think you is like
to come of an habitation of devils? What
trow ye will be the end of a shoal of foul
fiends, and a company of most ugly mon-
strous hell-cats? What is like to become
of a cage of howlets, ravens and vultures;
yea, a nest of vipers, toads, snakes, adders,
cockatrices, and all the most stinging ser-
pents, and venomous vermine in the world?
What will be the end of pild priests, filthy
friars, mangy monks, roguing Jesuites?
are not these a cage of unclean birds?

An Exposition

what do they study? what do they plot? what do they practise every day, but seditions, perjuries, murders, conspiracies, treacheries, and all manner of villainies? If I had no other reasons to persuade me that Rome shall fall, and come to a miserable end, yet this only would make me so to think, that these villainous Jesuites do teach and conclude in their cursed conventicles, that it is not only lawful, but also meritorious, to murder any Christian prince that is not of their catholic religion: Oh monstrous villains! O most hideous hell-hounds! have not these monsters suborned divers desperate caitiffs to embrue their hands in the blood of Christian princes? how many have been their plots? how desperate have been their practices to murder and poison our late queen Elisabeth, the French king, and our most gracious and late sovereign king James, and other Christian princes? But can such proceedings prosper? can such courses be blessed? can a man be established by iniquity? no, no, let them know for a certainty, that God will cross and curse all such devilish proceedings, as hitherto he hath done, his most holy name be praised. But if any man list to know more of the practices and proceedings of Jesuits, let him read M. Doctor Sutcliff his answer to Parsons

ward-word, a book worthy to be read and known of all men. But now to grow to a conclusion of this point, and to wind up together all the reas ons and causes of Rome's ruin; thus I do determine, that forasmuch as Rome is 'the great whore, with whom have committed fornication the kings of the earth:' forasmuch as 'Rome hath made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication:' forasmuch as Rome hath deceived all nations with her enchantments: forasmuch as Rome is a den of devils, and a cage of unclean birds: forasmuch as Rome hath shed the blood of the apostles, martyrs, and saints: forasmuch as Rome hath murdered the Son of God; therefore it shall at last come to most miserable destruction, being that Chittim which in the end must needs perish; for what punishment, what pain, what torture, what torment can be enough for this damnable whore, which hath committed such execrable and most outragious villainies? be it therefore known unto all men by these presents, that Rome for all her monstrous and prodigious sins, shall fall still more and more, and come to a fearful destruction, even in this life. But some man may say, what shall become of Rome, and of all her friends after this life? St. John an-

swere, that 'if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and he shall be tormented in fire and brimstone before the holy angels, and before the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment shall ascend, and they shall have no rest day nor night which worship the beast,' &c. Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11. Here is sentence of eternal damnation passed upon all the friends of Rome. O that all papists would consider this in time, and think with themselves, what a woful thing it is to be a papist, for they and their kingdom must go down in this life, and in the life to come they must be tormented in hell-fire for ever. For St. John faith flatly, that all papists 'shall be cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, where they shall be strained and tried till blood come out of the wine-press, unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs,' Rev. xiv. 20. And again he saith, that 'the beast and the false prophet were taken alive, and cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.' Rev. xix. 20. Let all men therefore take heed how they join with the papists, for we see what shall be their end;

both in this life and the life to come.— Therefore let all God's people come out of Babylon, and hasten out of Sodom, least they be wound up in their judgments. Let all wise men practise the policy of the Gibeonites, who when they saw that Joshua did so mightily prevail against the Canaanites, and beat down all before him, did very politicly provide for their own safety, and by subtle means enter into league with Joshua and the Israel of God. So let all that have any care of their own salvation, speedily forsake Babylon, which otherwise will fall upon their heads; and fly to Zion, which shall stand fast forevermore. And thus having reduced all the five following chapters, to prove these foregoing points, I will proceed unto the twentieth chapter: for there is almost nothing of any moment or difficulty in the xv. xvi. xvii. xviii. and xix. chapters, but it hath been already opened and expounded.

C H A P. XX.

SAINT John having in the former chapters plainly and plentifully set down the utter overthrow both of the beast and

and false prophet, that is, the Roman empire and the papacy, doth now in this chapter set forth the condemnation of the dragon, their grand captain, which set them all on work. For there hath as yet been no motion of him, which hath been the beginner and raiser up of the rest, and the great worker of all mischief; therefore now cometh his judgment and condemnation. Now because he hath been a more general worker, and his mischief hath extended larger than the kingdom of antichrist, therefore in this twentieth chapter there is an history of him set forth by itself:

First. How he seduced the nations before the coming of Christ: afterward, how Christ at his coming bindeth him, by the light of his gospel from seducing the nations, and so holdeth him shut up for the space of a thousand years, in which the church did greatly flourish, and many were raised up unto the spiritual life. But when the thousand years were expired, Satan was let loose, and went forth again to seduce, and by the great antichrist and the Turk, gathered innumerable multitudes into his armies to fight against the church, which armies are called Gog and Magog.

But they are all overcome and destroyed, and that old serpent himself is caught, and together with his instruments, the beast

and the false prophet, is cast into hell-fire, to be tormented forever. And this is the sum and principal drift of this chapter.

It containeth five principal things, as it were five parts thereof.

The first is the binding and chaining up of Satan by our Lord Jesus, for the space of a thousand years.

The second is, the flourishing of the church during the time of Satan's captivity.

The third is the loosing of Satan after the thousand years expired, and the woful effects thereof.

The fourth is, the casting of the devil into a lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet were.

The fifth is a glorious description of the last judgment, wherein every man shall be judged according to his works.

THE TEXT.

• And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he took the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and he shut him up, and sealed the door upon him, that he should deceive the people no more till the

• thousand years were fulfilled: so after
• that he must be loosed for a little season.'

Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.

This angel here spoken of, is our Lord Jesus, who is therefore said to have the key of the bottomless pit, because he hath power and authority over hell and death, as we have heard before.

By the chain in his hand is meant the doctrine of the gospel.

The time when Satan was thus taken and bound, was when Christ first preached the gospel, and his apostles after him, to all nations.

The cause why he was bound and chained up, was for that he had a long time seduced all nations, and reigned as king and lord over the Gentiles, and greatly seduced the Jews also.

The time of his imprisonment is set down to be a thousand years; that is, all the time from the preaching of Christ and his apostles, until Gregory the seventh, and other monstrous Popes, which did let Satan loose again. Which space of time is guessed by the learned, to be a thousand years, or thereabouts. But here it is to be observed, that this binding of Satan is to be taken simply and absolutely, as though Satan was so bound and chained up for this thousand years, that he could not seduce at all, or

do no mischief at all after the preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles, I say, this is not to be taken simply, but after a sort; that is, that he could not so generally and universally seduce all nations, as he had in former times, before the coming of Christ. For otherwise, it is well known, that even after Christ's time, he did greatly persecute the church, bring in many errors and heresies, and harden and blind many mens hearts: but yet all this was nothing, in comparison of that which he had wrought in former ages, when he was even as it were the god of the world, and the Gentiles worshipped him as god, as the apostle teacheth, 'That all the worship of the heathen nations was the worship of devils,' 1 Cor. x. 20. And again, 'That God in times past suffered all the Gentiles to walk in their own ways.' Acts xiv. 16. And then was Satan a great prince indeed. But now cometh a chain for him: For Christ preacheth the gospel, and fendeth forth his disciples with power, and thereupon saith, 'I saw Satan fall down like lightning:' Luke xviii. 10. for the preaching of the gospel beateth down the kingdom of Satan and sin.

Moreover, it is to be noted, that notwithstanding all Satan's power and might, craft, and subtlety, yet this angel which

hath the key of the bottomless pit, doth apprehend him, and shut him up, and seal the door upon him: that he cannot get abroad to seduce so generally as in former time.

But St. John saith, that 'after a thousand years, he must be loosed for a little season;' that is, the time wherein the great antichrist should bear the sway: which was some four or five hundred years. For the gospel did prevail in some measure in the world, a thousand years after Christ, and the principles and grounds of true religion continued in the church until the first loosing of Satan, though with many blots, corruptions, and abuses. For after the first 600 years, the clear sincerity of the truth was much dimmed with errors and heresies; but yet the main grounds did remain till the full expiration of the thousand years. Now we know that the gospel hath been preached in these last days above threescore years. Therefore it followeth, that the strength of popery continued not much above five hundred years; which here the Holy Ghost for our comfort calleth a little season: of which we have heard before, and therefore I do here omit it.

' And I saw seats, and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto

them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which did not worship the beast, neither his image, neither had taken his mark upon their foreheads, or on their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead men shall not live again until the thousand years be finished: this is the first resurrection.— Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: for on such the death hath no power; but they shall be the priests of God, and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years,

Rev. xx. 4, 5, 6.

Here now is set forth the state of the church militant, for the space of the thousand years wherein Satan was chained up. For it is said here, that the church did grow and flourish; yea, and greatly exercise her power and authority during the time. And therefore St. John saith, that he saw seats, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. Whereby he meaneth, that the apostles and their successors had their chairs, seats, and consistories, wherein they did both preach the word, and execute the churches censures; as the scribes and pharisees before did sit in the chair of Moses.

take it, the latter part of the fourth verse is to be referred to the first clause, to wit, that 'the church did live and reign with Christ a thousand years:' which is not to be understood of the church triumphant, as some do take it, and all the rest of the fourth verse: but of the flourishing estate of the church militant during the time of Satan's captivity: for all the faithful do after a sort live and reign with Christ, even here in the earth, when they overcome the world by faith, and subdue Satan and sin by the power of grace.

Now where it is said, that 'John saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,' &c. It is to be understood of those, which in the time of the persecuting empire, and growing of the papacy, were slain for the truth. For the second beast, which is the dominion of Popes, reigned not in those thousand years, in the which Satan was bound, but yet did grow by degrees towards their height, and used great tyranny against the servants of God before Satan's full loosing.

The Chiliaets, or Millinaries do fondly gather from this scripture, that after the overthrow of antichrist, the Lord Jesus would come and reign with the faithful here a thousand years upon the earth, and that in this time that Christ did so reign as

a great and glorious king upon the earth, his subjects should enjoy all manner of earthly pleasures and delights. This foolish error is confuted by the words that follow in the text, as we shall see afterwards.

Whereas he saith, 'The rest of the dead shall not live again:' It is to be understood of such as were spiritually dead, that is, such as despised the gospel which was preached those thousand years, and were not thereby revived and quickened unto eternal life; but did still remain as men dead in sins and trespasses.

Therefore the meaning of St. John is, that as in the thousand years, many that heard Christ and his apostles, and their successors, were raised up from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; so many others were not quickened by their doctrine, but still dwelt in their sins, whom he calleth the rest of the dead: and he saith, 'these shall not live again;' meaning the life of God, or the life of grace. And whereas he addeth, 'until the thousand years be finished,' he meaneth never, or not at all, for so the word until is often taken in the scriptures: and it is sure, that after the expiration of the thousand years, they did not live the life of God, and the life of the Spirit. For then the devil was let loose upon the world, to work his plea-

sure, and to seduce with all efficacy of error and iniquity.

Whereas it is said, ‘This is the first resurrection;’ he meaneth the rising from sin, to the life of righteousness, which was in the thousand years of the gospel’s preaching, and therefore he addeth, that ‘he is blessed that hath part in the first resurrection,’ &c. and saith, ‘that all such shall reign with Christ a thousand years.’ Which is meant of the reign of the faithful even upon earth for the space of the thousand years in which Satan was bound: but yet excludeth not their eternal glory in the heavens.

‘And when the thousand years were expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go out to deceive the people which are in the four corners of the earth, even Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up unto the plain of the earth, and they compassed the tents of the saints about, and the beloved city: but fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them,’ Rev. xx. 9.

Now St. John telleth us, that after the termination of a thousand years, Satan shall be let loose upon the world, for their unthankfulness, and contempt of the go-

pel, to seduce and deceive, even as much as ever he did. No wonder therefore, that the two great and monstrous heresies of popery and mahometry, did now begin mightily to grow and encrease in the world. For what other thing can be looked for after this letting loose of Satan?

But we are to observe, that as Satan was bound by degrees; through the ministry of Christ, and his apostles, and in their immediate successors; so also he was loosed by degrees, by the prevailing of heresies, till the great antichrist was hatched, and brought into the possession of his cursed chair. For Satan was not fully loosed, till the year of our Lord 998. At what time Silvester the II. came to be Pope, who was in league with the devil. History reports that at his death he called for the cardinals, and confessed that he had familiarity with the devil, and how he had given himself unto him body and soul, so that he might come to the papal dignity.

After him succeeded other Popes, which were notorious monsters, some of them murderers, some poisoners, some sorcerers, some conjurers; by whom the devil was fully loosed, all light of the gospel and true religion being in a manner clean put out, and most abominable idolatry, and all manner of villany spreading over the face of

the earth, and hereof St. John saith, that
‘Satan being fully loosed, he went forth
‘to deceive the people which were in the
‘four corners of the earth; even Gog and
‘Magog,’ &c. This seducing by Satan
here spoken of, is the same with that which
is spoken chapter xiii. only this excepted,
that this of Gog and Magog is more gene-
ral. We read there, how all nations kind-
reds and tongues were made to worship
the image of the beast, and to receive his
mark; but that is to be extended no fur-
ther than to those kingdoms which were
subject to the papacy.

But here, by these armies of Gog and
Magog, are understood all the chief ene-
mies of the church in these last days, since
the loosing of Satan, both open and secret,
both Turk and Pope; for the Turk is an
open enemy, the Pope a more close enemy,
Gog signifieth *covered*, Magog *uncovered*,
whereby is noted the Turk: for the Pope
cometh covered under the name of Christ,
and Christ’s vicar, Peter’s successor, &c.
But the Turk cometh uncovered, for he
openly denieth and impugnieth Christ.

Moreover, the names of Gog and Ma-
gog are here set down, to note of what
countries these chief enemies should spring;
to wit, out of Scythia, Syria, Arabia, Italy,
and Spain; for Magog was the son of

Japheth, Gen. x. 2. of whom came the Scythians. Gog was the name of a great captain in the lesser Asia, which built a city, and named it after his own name, Gogkartah; that is the city of Gog: and it is put in the prophecy of Ezekiel for the whole region of the lesser Asia, and Syria; whereby the prophet did foretel, that the great enemies of the church should arise out of those coasts. And in very truth they did; for out of Egypt, Scythia, Syria, and the lesser Asia did spring up Ptolomeus, Seleucus, Antigonus, Cassander, and the rest of Alexander's successors, which vexed and oppressed the Jews by the space of 294 years, even until the coming of the Messiah at which time the divided Greek empire was overthrown, and translated to the Romans.

Furthermore, it is to be noted, that the prophet Ezekiel saith, ' That Gog is the chief prince of Mesech and Tubal:' by Mesech he meaneth Arabia; and by Tubal, Italy and Spain: noting thereby the countries and kingdoms from whence the great persecutors of the church, from the return out of the captivity of Babylon until the coming of the Messiah, should arise: for assuredly their enemies were collected of divers nations, but served chiefly under the princes of Asia the lesser, of Syria, and

of Scythia. Now then to conclude, Gog and Magog in Ezekiel, are put for the prince of those countries which were the chief captains in gathering great and mighty armies unto battle against the children of Israel, after they were come out of the captivity of Babylon. And the prophet there, in one sum, under the armies of Gog and Magog comprehendeth all the enemies that fought against them from time to time, after the captivity, unto the coming of Christ. And now for the application of this unto the enemies of the church under the gospel, we must first note, that through this book the figures and phrases of speech are taken out of the law and the prophets. Now therefore, when the Lord would set forth in one sum all the enemies of the church, which Satan mustereth after the time of his loosing out of prison, before the coming of Christ to judgment; there is no place more fit to set forth all these armies, then those armies of Gog and Magog; and therefore the names, even Gog and Magog are here brought in, to set forth these huge armies of the Turk, and of Pope, and of all the enemies of the church in these last days, which should gather themselves to battle, being in number as the sand of the sea, as St. John saith, ' yea, did cover the whole face of the earth with their

‘ multitudes; and compass the tents of the saints about, and the beloved city:’ that is, did make war against the church and people of God, which, in comparison of them, were but as a few tents, or some little city. But mark what followeth, and consider the issue of the battle: the Holy Ghost saith expressly, that ‘ fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them:’ which doth plainly shew, that the armies of Gog and Magog, though never so huge, shall be destroyed by the fire of God’s wrath:

Now from this I gather, that as the armies of the Pope shall go down still more and more, as formerly hath been shewed, and as experience in many years good success, both in Ireland, Netherland, and against Spain also, hath partly proved (God’s most holy name be praised:) so also the armies of the Turk shall be overthrown, so far forth as they fight against the true church; or at least be so kept back, that they shall not be able to compass the tents of the saints, as we see and feel this day. God be thanked.

‘ And the devil that deceived them, was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are and shall be tormented, even day and night forevermore,’ Rev. xx. 10.

Here is set down the devil's doom; to wit, that he shall be cast down into the infernal pit, as well worthy, both for his seducing all nations, and stirring up the armies of Gog and Magog against the church, even to root it up, if it were possible.

Therefore St. John telleth us, that forasmuch as he is the author of all mischief, and he that hath set all the rest to work, therefore both he and his instruments, the beast and the false prophet, Gog and Magog, shall all drink of the same cup of God's eternal wrath, and be all thrown down together into one close prison, which is that gaping gulf, and infernal lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever.

Lo then what shall be the end of the devil, the Turk, the Pope, the emperor, the king of Spain, the cardinals, and all other the devil's instruments, which here on earth have persecuted the church, and compassed the tents of the saints, and the beloved city.

Now after all this, in the five last verses, St. John entereth into a lively and clear description of the last judgment; first, noting the terror and majesty of the Judge, himself, in this, that 'from his face both 'heaven and earth fled away,' Rev. xx. 11, that is, no creature shall be able to endure his angry countenance in that day: and yet withal setting down the purity and upright-

ness of his judgment, and judgment-seat, calling it a white throne. And after this, the general sitting and personal appearing of all men before him, of what degree, estate, or condition soever: for both 'death and hell, sea and grave did deliver up their dead,' Rev. xx. 11, and all without exception came to judgment, and the books of their consciences were opened (for every man's work is engraven upon his conscience, as it were in letters of brass, or with the point of a diamond, as the prophet speaketh.) 'And they were judged of those things which were written in the books according to their works, and according to the testimony of their own consciences.' And death and hell,' Rev. xx. 12, 14, that is, all the heirs of death and hell, even all the society of reprobates, both papists, atheists, and all unbelievers, yea, 'whosoever were not found written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.' Rev. xx. 15, Now here I would have it diligently observed, that the Holy Ghost hath three several times in this book described the last judgment; to wit, in the latter end of the eleventh chapter, in the latter end of the fourteenth chapter, and now in the latter end of this chapter. And moreover, I would have the order and causes of these

descriptions, well weighed: for in the eleventh chapter, having before described the kingdom of the Pope and the Turk, with their overthrow, and also the preaching and prevailing of the gospel in these last days, he cometh to describe the last judgment: In the fourteenth chapter, having set down, that 'the everlasting gospel should be plentifully preached in this last age, and the overthrow of Babylon' immediately following, forthwith he proceedeth to the description of the last day: In this chapter, having before concluded of the utter overthrow of Rome, and of the beast and false prophet, of Gog and Magog, and all adversary power, at length he proceedeth to this description of Christ's second coming, which we have heard of. And out of all this I do gather; that the utter overthrow of the Pope, and all his adherents shall be in this life, a little before the coming of Christ judgment.

CHAP. XXI.

AS we have heard before the utter overthrow of the beast, and the false prophet, and all their adherents; and also of

the everlasting condemnation of the dragon, that old serpent, which set them all to work: so now in this chapter we are to hear of that most happy and blessed estate which the faithful shall dwell in forevermore: so that the main design of this chapter is most fully to describe that infinite glory and endless felicity to the which all the 144,000, that is, all the elect of God shall be advanced, when both the beast, and all that have received his mark, shall be cast down into the infernal lake.

This chapter may very fitly be divided into four parts:

The first is, a description of the renovation of the world, and the restoration of the creature.

The second is, a laying forth of the most glorious estate of the church, when it shall be freed from all misery.

The third is, a protestation from God himself concerning the renovation of all things, the felicity of the elect, and the endless pain and torment of all reprobates.

The fourth is a lively description of the very kingdom of God, and the unspeakable joys of heaven under the figure of a great city, called the 'holy Jerusalem;' which city is here most gloriously described in her walls, gates, foundations, streets,

height, length, breadth, brightness, matter, form, persons, and inhabitants.

THE TEXT.

‘ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride trimmed for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, neither crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the first things are passed away,’ Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3, 4.

By a ‘ new heaven and a new earth,’ is meant the renewed estate of heaven and earth after this life, in their quality, not in their substance. For we do believe according to the scripture, that this visible heaven, and this visible earth shall continue forever, as touching their matter and substance; but shall be greatly altered and changed in condition and quality: for St.

Peter saith, ‘ We look for new heavens, and a new earth, according to his promise, wherein dwelleth righteousness;’ 2 Pet. iii. 13: that is, such heavens, and such an earth, as is free from all corruption and sin. Which thing also the apostle St. Paul doth plainly teach, saying, that ‘ the creature doth fervently expect, when the sons of God shall be revealed:’ Rom. viii. 19. that is when God’s children shall be made known to be as they are, the very heirs of infinite glory, which in this life doth not appear. And he yielded two reasons of this desire of the creature; one is, because in the mean time it is subject to vanity and corruption: the other is, that then it shall be free from both. And for this cause the apostle saith, that ‘ the creature groaneth with us and earnestly desireth and longeth after that day wherein it shall be set free from the bondage of corruption,’ Rom. viii. 20, 21. and redintegrated and restored to that pristine estate wherein it was before the fall. But whether this is to be understood of heaven and earth only, or of heaven and earth with their adjuncts and particular creatures, I will not here go about to discuss: howbeit, I do greatly incline to their opinion, which hold, that heaven and earth, with all their furniture, being redintegrated and restored to their

first estate, shall remain for ever, to set forth the glory of the Creator, and for that use of glorified men which now the angels have of them.

Now whereas St. John added, that there shall be no more sea: he meaneth that there shall be no more any troublesome and confused estate of this world, no more broils, waves, tempests, and storms, as it falleth out in this life: for the word *sea* is so taken twice or thrice before.

By 'the holy city, new Jerufalem,' he meaneth the church triumphant, which therefore it is said 'to come down from God out of heaven,' because it hath all his newness and holiness from God, and from heaven, whereby it is now prepared and made ready to be married unto Christ, even 'as a bride tricked and trimmed up for her husband.' And for this cause St. John heareth 'a voice from heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he will be their God.' Rev. xxi. 3. meaning thereby, that Jesus Christ will keep house with his glorified spouse, and be at bed and board with her for ever in the heavens, at that time 'she shall be freed from all tears, woe and misery,' as the next verse declareth, yielding also a reason hereof,

which is, that the first things are passed; that is, the state wherein the world is now, being subject to many afflictions, temptations, vanities, and corruptions.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are faithful and true. And he said unto me, it is done: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, I will give to him that is athirst, of the well of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and liars, shall have their parts in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

Here the omnipotent God, which sitteth upon the most glorious throne, doth protest, that he will make all things new; that is, restore the world to that excellent estate wherein it was before Adam's fall; and his elect to a state and condition far more excellent in heaven: for the greater certainty and assurance of it, willeth and commandeth John to write it, and record it as a thing most certain and infallible, and to set it down as a thing already

done. For things to come, which are decreed in the council of God, are as certain as if they were past: for God cannot err, alter, nor change, and therefore he saith, I am Alpha, and Omega, the First and the Last, the unchangeable and immutable God: and addeth, ' that he will give freely to every one that is athirst of the well of the water of life; ' Rev. xxi. 6. that is, without all regard of our deserts, he will give to every one, that earnestly seeketh after heaven and heavenly things, his fill thereof. And moreover, that whosoever overcometh in the spiritual battle ' shall have the full fruition of all good things,' both in this life and the life to come, as having special right and interest therein through Christ, God being his Father, and he his son and heir. But on the contrary, he willeth it to be written and recorded as a thing most certain and sure, that all reprobates, all atheists, worldlings, and all ' unbelievers shall have their part and portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone forever,' Rev. xxi. 8.

' And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven plagues, and talked with me saying, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high moun-

‘ tain, and shewed me that great city, that holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her shining was like unto a stone most precious, as a jasper stone, clear as crystal,’ Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 11.

Here one of the angel’s mentioned in the sixteenth chapter, which had a vial full of God’s wrath, talketh with St. John, and telleth him, that ‘ he will shew him the bride the Lamb’s wife;’ that is, the triumphant church in her glorified estate, being united and married unto Christ in the kingdom of glory. And therefore St. John saith, that this ‘ angel carried him away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed him that great city, that holy Jerusalem,’ &c.

We read in the seventeenth chapter, that ‘ when this angel shewed John the whore of Babylon, he carried him away into the wilderness in the spirit:’ because the whore of Babylon should make the church barren and desolate, as the wilderness. But now that he is to shew him the spouse of Christ in her glory, and to describe the everlasting Jerusalem, ‘ he carrieth him in the spirit unto a very high mountain,’ that he might take a sight of it, as Moses was carried up to the top of mount Nebo, that from thence he might take a view of

the holy land. Which teacheth, that none can take a right view of heaven and heavenly things, but only such as fly an high pitch, and mount far above this earth in holy affections, and heavenly contemplation.

Moreover, St. John telleth us, that as soon as he took a sight of this new Jerusalem (far passing all Sinai's sights) forthwith he spied in it the 'very glory of God.' If he had said, he had spied the glory of an angel, it had been more: but that he saw the very glory of God, it is most of all. For who can conceive or express what the glory of God is, being infinite? The apostle saith, that 'God dwelleth in inaccessi-ble light,' or such light as none can approach unto.

Then this is one word for all touching the beauty and super-excellency of the new Jerusalem, that it comprehendeth in it the very glory of God: but yet for amplifications sake, it is compared to a jasper stone, for never-fading greenness: and to a crystal stone, for bright shining and glittering forever.

' And had a great wall and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and the names written, which are the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east-side there were three gates, and on the north-side three gates, on the south-side

‘ three gates, and on the west-side three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the Lamb’s twelve apostles,’ Rev. xxi, 12, 13, 14.

Now St. John proceeds to the description of the wall and gates of this great city. This we all know, that a strong wall serveth for the defence and safety of a city, and for the security of such as dwell in it: for if it be so high that none can scale it, and so thick that none can batter it, then it is indeed impregnable, and the citizens in great security: but the wall of heaven is so high, as none can scale it, as it is set down in this twelfth verse; and so thick, that no double cannon can pierce it, as appeareth in the seventeenth verse, therefore all the inhabitants of this new Jerusalem are out of all fear of danger.

Moreover, this city hath twelve gates, to signify an hard access for enemies to break in: and an easy passage for the citizens themselves to go in and out: and at those twelve gates twelve angels, at every gate an angel, as it were a porter, to see that none be let in but the true citizens, and free denizens, and such as have to do there, which are here named to be the twelve tribes of Israel, that is, all the elect of God, both of the Jews and Gentiles.

Moreover, it is said, that there were
' three gates on every side of the city, both
' east, west, north and south,' to note, that
out of all quarters of the earth the redeemed
should be gathered; and as our Saviour
saith, ' Many shall come from the east,
' and the west, the north, and south, and
' sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
' in the kingdom of God,' Matth. viii. 11.
So that it is not material what country or
nation a man is of, whether English, Scotch,
French, or Spanish, so he be a believer;
for then he shall be sure to be let in at one
gate or another, either at the east gate, or
the west gate, the north gate, or the south
gate. Moreover, the wall of the city hath
twelve foundations; that is to say, it is surely
founded: And in every gate the name of
an apostle, so that all the gates had the
names of the Lamb's twelve apostles, to
signify that the ground and foundation of
this city is laid upon the ' doctrine of the
' apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ him-
' self being the chief corner-stone,' Eph.
ii. 20.

' And he that talked with me had a
' golden reed to measure the city withal,
' and the gates thereof, and the wall there-
' of. And the city lay four-square, and
' the length is as large as the breadth of
it: and he measured the city with the

‘ reed, twelve thousand furlongs, and the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, by the measure of man, that is, of the angels.’ Rev. xxi. 15, 16, 17.

Now St. John telleth us, that the angel which talked with him ‘ had a golden reed, to measure both the city, and the gates, and the walls thereof.’ Measuring with reeds was a thing of great use in ancient time, as we read in the prophecy of Ezekiel and Zechariah, and as we have heard in the eleventh chapter. But because all things belonging to this celestial Jerusalem are super-excellent and glorious; therefore the very measuring rod and reed is of pure gold. This great and glorious city is aid to ly four-square, to note unto us, that it standeth fast and unmoveable; for round things are easily rolled and moved this way or that way, hither and thither: but square things are not apt to roll or move. This everlasting Jerusalem therefore lieth four-square, because it can never be moved, but standeth fast for ever; as the apostle saith, ‘ Seeing we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace whereby we may so serve God, that we may please him with reverence and fear,’ Heb. xii. 28.

The angel with his golden measuring rod measureth the square sides of the city, both in length, breadth, height and depth of it, and findeth each of them to be 12,000 furlongs, which allowing eight furlongs to the mile, maketh in our account 1500 miles, and so the whole square of this great city cometh to 6000 miles, which is a goodly compass, and noteth unto us the great largeness of God's kingdom, and that there is room enough for all the inhabitants thereof: ye, most pleasant and commodious rooms, as our Lord Jesus saith, ' In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you,' John i. 4.

After this he measureth the thicknes of the wall, and findeth it be ' a hundred and forty and four cubits thick,' which after our common account of two cubits to a yard, amount to seventy and two yards, which is a jolly thickness, even so thick as no cannon can pierce, and therefore altogether inexpugnable, as hath been said before.

' And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stone:

‘ The first foundation was of jasper, the second of saphire, the third of chalcedony, the fourth of an emerald, the fifth of a sardonyx, the sixth of a sardius, the seventh of a crysolite, the eighth of a beryl, the ninth of a topaz, the tenth of a chrysoparsus, the eleventh of a jacinth, the twelfth of an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, and every gate is of one pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, as shining glafs,’ Rev. xxi. 18, 19, 20, 21.

As we have heard of the form of this goodly city; so now we are to hear of the matter of it, that is to say, of what stuff it is made. First, St. John telleth us, that the whole city is of most pure and glittering gold, like unto glafs: and that the wall was of jasper; most green and flourishing; and also, that the very foundation of the wall was beautified and adorned with twelve sundry kinds of precious stones which he reckoneth up. We count it a great matter here below, to compass and close in our houses with a wall of brick, and none can do it but men of place: but alas, what is that to this wall? What is brick to precious stones, and pebbles to pearl? But St. John addeth, that the gates were of pearl, and the streets of the city of pure gold; Oh how brave, how beautiful, how glori-

rious, how glittering, how gorgeous, how admirable a city is this! for if the gates be of pearl, and the streets of gold, then what are the inner rooms, what are the dining chambers, and what are the lodging rooms? But here we may not grossly imagine, that the kingdom of God is of such metal and matter indeed, as is here described. But the Holy Ghost would give us some taste of it, and after a sort shadow out unto us under these things, which are in most precious account amongst men, what the glory and excellency of the immortal kingdom is. For otherwise, there is no comparison betwixt gold, pearl, and precious stones, and those heavenly, invisible, and immortal things which we look for, and hope for through Christ: which in very deed are so great, so glorious, and so inconceivable, that gold, pearl, and precious stones are scant so much as any shew, shadow, or resemblance thereof.

‘ And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And this city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did light it, and the Lamb is the light of it.— And the people which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth shall bring their honour and

glory unto it. And the gates of it shall not be shut by day: for there shall be no night there. And the glory and honour of the Gentiles shall be brought unto it. And there shall enter into it no unclean thing, neither whatsoever worketh abominations or lies: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life,' Rev. xxi. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

In this new Jerusalem there is no temple, as was in the old Jerusalem; for there shall be no need of any, no need of doctrine, of sacraments, of prayer as in the old temple, wherein the law was taught, sacraments administered, sacrifices offered, and many other rites and ceremonies observed.

But St. John faith, that now ' God and Christ shall be all in all. They shall be the temple of the most holy city.' And all the elect shall fully know them, and dwell with them forever.

And as the city hath no need of any temple; so hath it ' no need of any light, either of sun or moon: for the glory of God, and the brightness of the Lamb do light it forever:' whose incomprehensible brightness doth as far excel the brightness of the sun and moon, as they do excel a little candle at noon day. But it may be demanded, Who shall dwell in this so glo-

rious a city, and in this so great a light? St. John answereth, that 'the people that are saved shall walk in it:' that is, all the Israel of God, all true believers, which are happy that ever they were born, that they may come to the possession of such a kingdom as is here described: for St. John saith, that the resplendent brightness of this city is so great, that even 'the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour unto it:' and also, that 'the glory and honour of the Gentiles shall be brought unto it.'

Oh how unspeakable is the glory of this city, that kings shall throw down their crowns and sceptres before it; accounting all their pomp and glory but as dust, in respect of it! For the magnificence and pomp of all the potentates of the earth shall here be laid down. And albeit none of the kings and nobles of the Gentiles might be admitted into the old Jerusalem, yet all the Gentiles that believe shall be admitted into this new Jerusalem, and made free denizens thereof forever. And although the gates of this city always stand open both night and day, as not fearing any danger of enemies: 'yet no unclean thing shall enter into it, but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' Thus we see how gloriously the Holy

Ghost hath described unto us this city of the saints, and habitation of the just for evermore. He needs must be a very block that is not moved with the consideration of this endless felicity: For this city is described unto us in so glorious and admirable a manner, to bring us into love with it, and to work in us an unquenchable thirst and desire after it. Oh therefore let us spend many thoughts upon it; let us enter into deep meditations of the inestimable glory of it; let us long till we come to the fingering and possession of it, even as the heir longeth till he come to the possession of his lands; let us think every day ten, and every year twenty; till we be in possession; let us with the apostle, ' sigh and groan, ' desiring to be cloathed with our house ' which is from heaven: ' 2 Cor. v. 2. Let us in the mean time cast away all things that may hinder us in our Christian course; let shake off every burthen, and run with patience the race that is set before us; let us as they which prove masters, abstain from all lets and hinderances: and since we strive so exceedingly for a corruptible crown; how much more ought we for an incorruptible? For what pains, what cost, what labour can be enough for a kingdom? Let us therefore strive and strain to get into

this golden city, where streets, walls, and gates, and all is gold, all is pearl; yea, where pearl is but as mire and dirt, and nothing worth. Oh what fools are they which deprive themselves willingly of this endless glory, for a few stinking lusts! Oh what mad men are they which bereave themselves of a room in this city of pearl, for a few carnal pleasures and delights! Oh what bedlams and straught beasts are they which shut themselves out of these everlasting habitations for a little transitory pelf! Oh what intolerable sots and fops are all such as will willingly be barred out of this palace of infinite pleasure, for the short fruition of worldly lucre and trash! Let us therefore, in all time to come, make more reckoning of heaven, and less reckoning of the earth; let us mind heavenly things, and despise earthly things; let us press hard unto the things that are before, and forget the things that are behind; let us strive hard for the prize of the high calling of God, and contemn even the glory of this world.

C H A P. XXII.

IN this chapter St. John proceedeth yet more largely to describe the blessed estate of all God's saints in the kingdom of glory; and the principal scope and drift of this chapter is yet more to enlarge the joys of God's people after this life, and to ratify the authority of this prophecy.

This chapter containeth four principal parts.

The first is an amplification of the joys of God's kingdom.

The second is a confirmation of the authority of this book.

The third is an exhortation both to spread abroad the knowledge of this book: and also for every man to prepare himself for the coming of Christ unto judgment.

The fourth is a fervent desire of the church for the second appearing of Christ.

THE TEXT.

‘ And he shewed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the

‘ Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river was the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and gave fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree serve to heal the nations with. And there shall be no more curse but the throne of God, and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forevermore,’ Rev. xxii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

And the angel doth yet further shew unto John ‘ a pure river of the water of life: whereby is signified the overflowing abundance of good things which the righteous shall enjoy in the kingdom of glory.

This river is said to ‘ proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb;’ because God in Christ is the original of all this life and happiness.

Further it is added, that ‘ in the midst of the golden street of this new Jerusalem, and of both sides of the river, there was the tree of life:’ which representeth Christ now in his heavenly paradise, as in former time was represented Christ in the earthly paradise: and also that eternal and blessed

life which our first parents should enjoy, if they did continue in the obedience of God.

This tree standeth not in an out-corner of the city, but in the very midst of the street, and of both sides of the river, that all the citizens of the new Jerusalem might have free access unto it, and taste of the most dainty fruits thereof in great variety: for 'it beareth twelve manner of fruits,' that is, in Christ all variety of pleasure, and endless light is to be found.

This tree beareth fruit every month, as well in winter as in summer: for here every month is autumn. The sense is, that in Christ the new and fresh fruits of immortal joy (without any satiety or loathing) are forever to be found.

The leaves of this tree are very medicinable and sanative; for they 'serve to heal the nations with:' that is, to preserve them from all diseases and griefs: which argueth a most blessed life, not subject to sickness, or any other infirmity. For Christ is our never failing physician, which in this life healeth all our spiritual diseases and infirmities, and after this life will preserve us in perpetual health and happiness.

'There shall be no more curse:' that is, in the heavenly paradise we shall be more be subject to any curse, as Adam was in

the earthly paradise: which also argueth the perfection of happiness after this life; and yet for further amplification of this most glorious estate, it is said, that the throne of God, and of Christ shall be erected in the midst of this golden street, and all his chosen people shall there accompany him, dwell with him, be always about him; yea, and serve him without weariness forever; yea, all his faithful worshippers shall come so near his throne, that ' they shall ' see his very face,' and be ravished with his glory, having his image, his name, his wisdom, and mercy imprinted in their foreheads: yea, his inconceivable light and glory shall be so resplendent, that there ' shall be neither night, nor need of candle:' but in his glittering and most glorious chamber of presence shall all his elect reign and triumph with him forever more in infinite felicity, and the very fruition of eternal delactation, where shall be mirth without measure, and solace without sorrow, as the prophet saith, ' In thy presence is the ' fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there ' is pleasure forevermore.'

' And he said unto me, These words are ' faithful and true, and the Lord God of ' the holy prophets sent his angel to shew ' unto his servants the things which must ' shortly be fulfilled. Behold, I come

“ shortly: Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.—
“ And I am John, which saw and heard these things, and when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. But he said unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the words of this book, worship thou God,’ Rev. xxii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

In these four verses are four principal reasons brought to confirm and ratify the authority of this book.

The first of them is the affirmation of the angel.

The second is the authority of the most high God.

The third is the testimony of Jesus, pronouncing them blessed which keep this prophecy.

The fourth is the testimony of St. John, who heard and saw these things. But because in the epistle to the reader I have more at large handled this argument, and these same verses; therefore here I do of purpose relinquish them: and that also of John’s adoration, and the angel’s refusal; being things most manifest and easy to understand.

“ And he said unto me. Seal not the

' words of the prophecy of this book, for
 ' the time is at hand. He that is unjust,
 ' let him be unjust still; and he which is
 ' is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he
 ' that is righteous, let him be righteous
 ' still; and he that is holy, let him be holy
 ' still. And behold I come shortly, and
 ' my reward is with me, to give every man
 ' according as his work shall be. I am
 ' Alpha and Omega, the beginning and
 ' the end, the First and the Last. Blessed
 ' are they that do his commandments, that
 ' their right may be in the tree of life, and
 ' may enter in through the gates into the
 ' city. For without shall be dogs, and en-
 ' chanters, and whoremongers, and mur-
 ' derers, and idolaters, and whosoever lov-
 ' eth or maketh lies.' Rev. xxii. 10, 11,
 12, 13, 14, 15.

Here is first an exhortation, to publish
 and proclaim the knowledge of this book
 to all people, and in no wise to conceal it,
 or keep it close, as formerly hath been
 shewed in the epistle.

Here is a further admonition, that 'they
 ' which are unrighteous, should be un-
 ' righteous still,' &c. Which is no allow-
 ance or encouragement granted unto wick-
 ed men to continue in their evil ways, but
 is rather a terrible threat, if we take all the
 words together in this and the next verse;

as if he should say, if men will needs continue in their filthiness, yet certainly Christ will come shortly, and reward them according to their works.

Or else it may be a phrase of speech, which they call an ironical concession; as in another place the Holy Ghost saith to the young man, ‘walk in the ways of thine own heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment:’ Eccl. xi. 9. 1 Kings xxii. 15. Math. vi. 45. So likewise in other places.

After this, here is blessedness pronounced upon all such as keep the commandments of God, as it is said, that ‘their right is in the tree of life;’ not meaning thereby, that their keeping of the commandments is the cause of their right in Christ, but only an effect or consequence. For our good works do not go before, as causes of our justification; but follow after, as declarations of the same. For by doing we are not made just in the sight of God, but only declared to be just in the sight of men.

And as for the keeping the commandments, we do it not in such perfection as God’s justice requireth, but in such measure as his mercy accepteth through Christ.

And here the Holy Ghost saith, that all they which have a right in Christ, which is the tree of life, and endeavour to keep the commandments, shall enter in through the gates into the new Jerusalem: but on the contrary, all the rout of reprobates, whom he calleth dogs, enchanters, whoremongers, &c. shall be utterly shut out, as having nothing to do in the everlasting city, their portion being allotted in the infernal lake.

‘ I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things. I am the root and generation of David, and the bright morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And let whosoever will take of the water of life freely. For I protest unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall diminish of the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from those things which are written in the book of life. He which testifieth these things, saith, Sure-

‘**l**y I come quickly. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus.’

‘**T**he grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen,’ Rev. xxii. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

The authority of this book is here again ratified from the person of him who is the author of it, that is, Jesus Christ, who is, here called, ‘**T**he root and generation of David:’ both because he is descended of the house of David according to the flesh; and also because the eternal kingdom which all the prophets did foretel, should spring out of the house of David, was indeed and in truth established in Christ, who is our true David, and our righteous branch, and as it is here said ‘**t**he bright morning Star,’ which hath most gloriously risen upon the world, to dispel all darkness, and to bring in the great and everlasting light.

Moreover, here is great protestation made in the 18th and 19th verses, of great plagues to be inflicted upon all such as ‘**s**hall add ‘**a**ny thing unto this book, or take away ‘**a**ny thing from it.’ Which also maketh greatly for the confirmation of the authority of this book. For that, to the which nothing may be added, and from the which nothing may be taken away, must needs be absolute and perfect: but this book is

such a one: therefore this book is absolute and perfect, being a part of God's everlasting truth.

Last of all, here is set down the fervent desire of the bride after the Bridegroom; for she being inflamed with the Spirit, desireth him to come and make up the match betwixt them, that she may be joined to him in marriage, celebrate the solemnization, and live together with him in the eternal triumph: which is the sense of these words, 'The Spirit and the bride, say, "Come." And let him that heareth, say, "Come." For it is proper and peculiar only to the bride to hear, wait, and long for the coming of Christ. "And let him that is athirst, come." That is, all such as thirst after righteousness, may truly say, "Come, sweet Jesus." For they are allowed freely to drink of the water of life. The plain meaning of all this is, that the church being directed by the Holy Ghost, most vehemently prayeth and longeth for the coming of Christ, that she may have her topful happiness, and full fruition of all those super-excellent things which are provided and purchased for her through him. And therefore to satisfy her desire, Jesus Christ the heavenly bridegroom saith, I come shortly. To the which the bride saith,

• Amen, Amen. Even so be it. Come
• Lord Jesus, come quickly,' and make an-
end of these sinful and conflicting days,
that all thy dear ones may have and enjoy
their long looked for happiness and felicity
in the heavens for ever and ever.





AN
EPI TOME
OF THE
REV. MR. BRIGHTMAN'S
EXPOSITION
ON THE
REVELATION:
Shewing what shall befall
GERMANY, SCOTLAND, HOLLAND,
AND THE
CHURCHES ADHERING TO THEM.
LIKEWISE,
WHAT SHALL BEFALL ENGLAND AND THE
HEIRARCHY THEREIN.

GLASGOW:
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1799.



AN EPITOME
OF THE
REV. MR. BRIGHTMAN'S EXPOSITION
ON THE
REVELATION.

LEARNED Mr. Brightman in his book of the exposition of the Revelation, seriously considering and resolving himself, that the seven epistles St. John wrote to the seven churches in Asia, were also written and directed to the seven succeeding churches among the Gentiles, of which those seven were a type or counterpane (omitting for brevity what he saith concerning the other four churches) we present you with a brief of what he more immediately applies to ourselves.

In general, he saith, that there was a terrible storm to be expected, and it would be such an horrible tempest, that it would terribly shake the Christian churches.

First, for Germany, there was the bitterest scourge for it that ever had fallen upon it, and that it was to come shortly: Germany should be like a house that is robbed by furious, mad and cruel spoilers, that would have no mercy of neither sex nor age; and the coming thereof should be sudden and unexpected, like a thief in the night; which we may see he truly foretold, it being fulfilled in our years, and the inhabitants thereof have found it by sad experience: let England take warning, considering what he said, was the cause that would bring all this misery; because, saith he, they took no care for a full and thorough Reformation, therefore by the just judgment of God, they should loose their citizens and inhabitants; and they with other churches should come to nothing, and shortly it would appear; he calls Germany by the name of Sardis.

Secondly, for Scotland and Holland, and the other churches adhering to them; (typified by godly Philadelphia) he saith, that they shall shut and none shall open, and they shall open and none shall shut; a virgin church, chaste, not so defiled with Rome's

superstitions as others; and speaks of a covenant and society they should be joined in, and bids them not to be perplexed nor disengaged at what the world spitefully pratteth of them, as if he had heard men in our times call them traitors, rebels, seditious, and bids them not regard the scoffs of the wicked; who will despise them, because they are godly, little, lowly, and weak in visible power, in comparison of their enemies: For, faith he, no enemy shall be able to prevail against them, and they shall set up a token of victory shortly; and every one shall be compelled to say, that they are dearly beloved of God, they shall be seen to prosper so exceedingly, and so marvelously promoted and advanced beyond all mens expectation; and when that storm and horrible tempest shall come upon the Christian churches, these churches shall stand fast like a pillar, and be preserved from wasting, when the other churches which did not take care for a full reformation, as they did, shall by the just judgment of God, come, as it were, to nothing; there shall be, faith he, such a miserable hurly burly of all things, that there shall scarce be the form of a church perceived, but only with holy Philadelphia. Though their enemies whet their blasphemous tongues against heaven and God himself,

they shall not carry it away scotfree, let them flatter as much as they will, no endeavours of their adversaries shall be wanting by flandering, railing, and all despiteful wrongs to bolt up this door; others shall with force and arms strive to stop it up, as if they would break this church all to pieces; but Christ will faithfully perform his word to them, if they keep covenant with him, and their enemies shall lose all their toil and sweat, and get nothing but shame and reproach: the praise of this churches courage shall be so much the greater, because being but little, and her adversaries so potent, she yields not, nor stoops not for all their proud threats, nor forfakes the truth, as terrified with the vain fears of men: and their enemies should boast and flourish, as if they alone were the people of God, creaking and cracking of nothing so much as the good of the church; but they do but deceive themselves and the world with glossing and goodly words, when they reject Christ's government, and stick to the abrogated ceremonies of the law, and of Rome, and thrusting a worship on Christ he hath not appointed, whereby they make themselves the synagogue of Satan, and not a congregation of saints; notable and famous at last shall the triumph of the church be over

papists and popery; hitherto they have fought against them with quills and ink, but the time shall come ere long when they shall quite be rooted out with weapons, and that with the help of this chutch; and let the experiences of this church establish their minds against all future fears: And for her reward she shall remain to see the restoring of the new church, wherein the new Jerusalem shall come down from heaven, and be joined with it in covenant and society, and enjoy the same felicity, then men shall acknowledge that her Reformation was right, and not a device of men's brains, as contentious babblers now affirm; when they shall see the same ordinances to flourish in the new Jerusalem, then Christ shall arise with triumph, and deface his enemies, and give triumph to his spouse: here therefore, O holy Philadelphia, thou art little and lowly, but God shall exalt thee, regard not the scoffs of the wicked, who shall by this means pull woful plagues upon themselves, but they shall bring thee a crown of glory, and the end of thy welfare is coming shortly.

3. For England, whose counterpane he takes to be Laodicea, terming it, luke-warm, vain-glorious Laodicea, concerning it, he saith, he that gathereth the tears of his children into his bottle, knoweth right

well, that I could never with dry eyes take a survey of this Laodiceas' lamentable condition; but I poured out tears and sighs from the bottom of my heart, when I beheld Christ's loathing of us, and were it not that out of duty, as a watchman, I dare not betray the salvation of this church, by not giving warning, I would have held my peace; but my hope is that those which love the truth, will hearken and accept, and think, as the truth is, I envy no man's person, honour or greatness: yet when I perceived that these seven churches were propounded for a type of all the churches among the Gentiles, and withal, saw the order, time and marvellous agreeing of all things together, I durst not perfidiously bury the truth in silence.

In that Christ saith of this church, 'I know thy works, that thou art neither hot nor cold;' he observeth, that Christ maketh mention of no one good thing it hath, the worst of all the seven (although there were many faithful in it) yet not any so past hope in regard of the outward form and government; which comes to pass not so much through its own default, as by means of the faulty government of the angels, who have so ordered and governed it, that it was tempered and blended together of strange contraries, a hoch-potch,

not so cold that we would be all Romish, and cleaving to idolatry and superstition altogether; nor yet so hot that we pursue and admit of a thorough reformation; abstaining from grosser sins, well given in religion, and will serve God so far as they may keep the estimation of prudent men moderate in religion, just statists or Protestants of state, which are known commonly to be luke-warm professors. This mediocrity, faith he, is worst of all, which indeed is honoured of the world, because it hath a certain shew of moderation and peaceableness; but Christ preferreth a blind papist, or no religion at all before this hotch-potch lukewarmness. And also whose outward government, and regiment in the church, is for the most part antichristian and Romish, tempering pure doctrine and Romish regiment together, broaching again monstrous opinions heretofore hissed out; and through this government they have so filled the church with such a corrupt clergy like themselves, to serve their own turn, ignorant drones, profane priests, Sir John Lack-Latines to say prayers, being so corrupt in their admissions to church-livings, that any stark fool or arrant knave, may fulfil their conditions for admittance, whereby they have filled and pestered the church and ministry with abundance of

this kind of vermin and vile varlots: And though they love riches and honour so dearly, that they content themselves with the loss of a full reformation; yet that they might not seem to prefer any thing before the truth and good of the church, they do with swelling words blazon the happiness of this church thus governed as it is; therefore the Holy Ghost brings in this angel boasting himself in vain-glory, I am rich, &c. Pastors of other churches are poor and of no preferment, but our bishops have lordly titles and revenues, the peers of the realm, equal to the greatest earls in wealth, attendance, palaces, stateliness, and all worldly pomp; so also the next ranks, deans, arch-deacons, prebends, &c. how mighty, massy, and pursey are they grown with wealth and boast thereof; doth not this amplify the honour of our church, to have our brave silken ministers to glister and jet through the streets with troops like noblemen, so by this means to drive away contempt from the ministry? no, saith he, this hath brought it, and this inferable luke-warmness; what do you tell them of the primitive times, as if they were children still in blankets and swaddling-bands? the church is now grown up to peace and riches, then it was poor and in persecution, their rules then not fit for us

now; but he demonstrates that such kind of dignities befeems not the ministers of the gospel: Thou art therefore for all this a beggarly wretch, O thou English angel, and Christ shall take a great pleasure in casting away and spewing out this angel, and his punishment shall be very dreadful: the land of Canaan once spewed out the inhabitants, and they were utterly overthrown; and shall their punishment be less or lighter whom Christ shall vomit out?

Therefore from these words, 'I would thou wert either cold or hot,' saith he, I would thou wert either all Romish, or admit of a thorough reformation: blaming those angels only, and those that cleave to them, priests and laity; who being bewitched with ambition and covetousness, do scornfully reject this holy reformation, not enduring the remedy, but accounting that worse than the disease: this churches disease, therefore, is more desperate.

Therefore he saith in plain terms, that the bishops, which he calls no better than lord-beggars, because their riches and honours (for the most part) they get by fawning, flattering, bribing, being ambitious to get under great men, and so creep into the court for preferment. But (saith he) both they and their whole luke-warm

hierarchy shall quite be overthrown, and never recover their dignity again: and at their overthrow they shall endanger the people, by reason of their consenting to them: Yet the people shall escape overthrowing; but it is to be feared, the people shall feel some adversity: but God will not suffer the hierarchy to escape; for they seeking honours and riches, and not those things which are Christ's, shall have reproachful judgments; few or none shall sigh or sob for them; but they and their priests shall be vile before the people, and men shall read the reports concerning them with delight: and they shall be cast out, and spewed up as vomit out of a corrupted stomach, that no man will be willing to take up again, from these words, ' Therefore because thou art luke-warm, and neither hot nor cold: It shall come to pass that I will spew thee out of my mouth. For thou sayest, I am rich and encreased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not how thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Therefore, saith he, purge out thy Romish leaven, dote not on thy riches and honours, but mind his things and honour, who for thy sake became poor and contemptible: set up faithful ministers in every congregation; re-

pent thee of the injury done to thy faithful watchmen, casting them into prison, and out of their livings, who have reproved thy superstition, and contended for this reformation. We have need of zeal, princes, peers, angels, people, earnestly to bend ourselves with all our power to turn away this evil that hangeth over our heads, by seeking a full reformation: for as yet we hang by geometry, as it were between heaven and hell, the steam of the Romish foggy lake doth deadly annoy us: let us therefore, saith he, mark what hath been said, and not like dogs, gnash and gnaw our teeth at the stone that is cast at us, but tremble at the dreadful hand that cast it, and hearken to these wholesome warnings with all speed.

The whole state of this church of Laodicea is worthy of serious consideration, as Mr. Brightman applies it to England, in this and other chapters; for he speaks of our times, as if he were now living.

And further he faith in his epistle, and elsewhere in his Commentary, that many are the miseries the Christian churches must suffer; for there will be a long and doleful tragedy, which will overthrow with scourges, slaughters, death and ruin: and that the sword of the Lord shall be

made drunk in their blood, except they receive warning and amend. But yet, saith he, be of good comfort Germany, France and Britany, and all you Christian churches: this is the last act; for after this theatre and long tragedy is past, there will succeed in the room thereof happy days, with abundance of peace and all good things. And it is his judgment, if I may not say his prophecy, comparing one scripture with another, and times with times, that before the year 1860, the Jews shall be called, the whore of Rome's nose shall be slit, and she stript of all her glorious garments and attire, her power and sinews cut, and the Pope of himself shall run out of Rome into Avignon, or into Bononia, or thereabout, one of his own cities, and the city of Rome shall be burnt with fire.

And that the king of Spain and the king of Polony, and some other kings shall bewail her, and would fain help her, but dare not, because they shall be afraid of their own safety, lest they be devoured or scorched with the same fire. And further, he saith, that the emperor of Germany shall destroy Rome, if he set to the work, it being most proper for him; but if he did not, some other shortly will have the praise of that victory: therefore, saith he, you godly princes take the matter in hand, and

set to this work, it shall not be a thing of so great trouble as you think for, fear not the huge armies that will come to help her: if you think the Spaniard, or the Frenchman, or any other king will raise mighty forces against you to defend her, as being Rome's friends; these are altogether vain fears, scare-crows, goblins, bug-bears for simple people: for her friends shall stand afar off with waiting, testifying their love, sighing and sobbing, but taking no pains nor striking a stroke to deliver their whore, being now an old withered harlot, but crying, ' Alas alas, that great city.' And again, he further saith: and you the rest of the Christian princes, you need do nothing, only be valiant, and of a good courage in dispatching your work for the Lord, and matters shall prosper as happily as you desire; and understand at length by what way you may procure to yourselves honour and tranquillity, so quietness and joy to the whole Christian world: Therefore draw your swords against Rome, for you shall prevail. And faith he, within forty-five years after Rome is destroyed, the Pope once more gathering all his friends together to try his last chance, shall then be utterly overthrown, being about the year 1898, which will be about the longest time he can continue. But Rome being

destroyed, and the Jews called, there will be then to the end, a most happy tranquility, and things very great indeed, and to be admired: the joy will be so much, that it will be strange and unexpected: for in the place of former troubles there will be perpetual peace, and then kings and queens will be nursing fathers and nursing mothers unto the Christian churches.

Then the great Turk shall be forty years on the decaying hand, and lose many countries, but in the year 1850, he shall be utterly overthrown: and then Christ shall reign with his ordinances chief in the world. They that please to examine Mr. Brightman's exposition on the Revelation, which he wrote above forty years ago, they shall find the composer hereof hath endeavoured as near as he could, to render the author in his own words, including much in so little room.

Yet not to forget that he saith further of England and Ireland, although Christ be angry with us by reason we are so far from a perfect reformation, and they which labour to bring in the popish ceremonies hated of God, to endanger the overthrow of our kingdom; yet he saith, Christ hath begun his kingdom (at that time he wrote) which was in the days of blessed Queen Elizabeth, who happily begun and pro-

ceeded in the work of reformation, according to the time and those days she lived in; the finishing whereof will be required of this generation; otherwise expect God hath a sad controversy with this land. But Christ hath begun his kingdom both in England and Ireland, to reign evermore: and the enemies shall endeavour many enterprises, yet they shall vanish like smoke, and they shall never prevail so as to overthrow Christ's kingdom begun here: for they will never want Christian princes to maintain his truth begun, which he faith began from the year 1558. For the seventh angel blew his trumpet for this time, and faith he would reign forevermore. He further faith, that ere long, before the year 1650 the fourth angel shall pour out his vial upon the sun; which sun he interprets the holy scriptures, which enlighten the minds of men as the beams of the sun do the eyes of the body. This vial being poured on them, shall give them greater force and edge, more vehemently to scrotch the man of sin: so that he shall gnash and rage against this sun, which hath so discovered his ugly hew to the world: and it shall not only burn and vex him, and those of his household, but also hypocrites, and all others who are not endued with true godliness; that they shall even boil with

envy and strife, and all bitterness of mind, like the men of Atlas, which curse the sun, because it parcheth them with too much heat.

And lastly, he saith (for the better understanding of what he means) that the city of Rome is not limited to that city, but extends as far as the Pope hath any dominion: so that the city of Rome is in destroying, if any of her dominions be in destroying, as he interprets the **Holy Ghost's** meaning. But the Pope is to be quite and fully overthrown at the year 1835. Therefore by computation Rome must be in destroying at 1794, in some of his dominions.

So I conclude this brief relation (of what Mr. Brightman largely insists upon, shewing his grounds in his book, why he affirms these things) with Christ's council to this church of Laodicea.

‘ I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried
 ‘ in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and
 ‘ white raiment that thou mayest be cloath-
 ‘ ed, and that the shame of thy nakedness
 ‘ do not appear; and anoint thine eyes
 ‘ with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.’



T W O.

S E R M O N S

BY THE

REV. MR. JAMES DURHAM,

Late Minister of the High-Church of Glasgow.

REV. xxii. 20.

*He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely,
I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come
Lord Jesus.*

THIS is but a short verse, but comprehensive of two most excellent truths, and most concerning expressions to the people of God. The first of them is our blessed Lord Jesus' word, and his last word that stands on record to his church, "Surely, I come quickly."—The other is, the hearty and warm welcome that John, in name of believers, or the bride, as verse 17, gives to this truth, "Amen, Even so, come Lord Jesus." And

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these two words close Christ's formal speaking to his church by revelation, and are the last words of a saint speaking in scripture to Jesus Christ; and therefore it will not be unsuitable to speak a word of them in the close of the opening of this book.

The first of these words is three times in this chapter, as verse 17, and 12, and here, besides other parts. And being so often recorded now when he is drawing near a close, it is to let us see of what concernment it is, and how it should be imprinted on our hearts, seeing he that utters it speaketh and repeateth no words in vain.

That it is said, "He that testifieth these things," telleth it is his word that speaketh, verse 16, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things unto you;" and verse 18, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of this prophecy." It is the same that is "the root and offspring of David the bright and morning star, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the First and the Last;" and it is prefixed as a commendation, to make us think the more of this word.

There is then in the first part these three things, 1. A truth laid down, a promise or prophecy that Jesus Christ cometh. 2. The certainty of it asserted "Surely I come." 3. The suddenness of his coming, "I come

quickly." First, "I come," that is, he is on his way: he says not, I will come, but I come. Although his coming to judgment be not yet, nevertheless he is on his way, and his coming is as certain as if he were come, and so he should be conceived by us as at hand. 2. "Surely, I come," This asseveration is to put it out of question, especially being spoken out of his mouth; its no messenger or midisman that speaketh, but Jesus Christ: and it was spoken with a *behold before*, verse 7, and 12, for the same end: and here a *surely* is added, as we said, to put it out of question, to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and to strengthen and comfort the hearts of his people that are longing for, and fainting under the delay of his coming. And 3. Because he knoweth there is need of present consolation to his own, and that others were ready to suspend his coming, and put the ill day far away, he saith, "I come quickly."

Object. It may be said, how can this be that his coming is quickly, is there not many hundreds of years since this was spoken, and yet he is not come? The apostle, 2 Pet. iii. foresaw this objection and giveth thee answers to it, which we shall repeat. 1. "A thousand years to him is but as one day." 2. Though he stay, yet he is not idle, "The Lord is not slack concerning

his promise, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

• He is perfectly his body, gathering in his saints, making all things ready, therefore he is patient to us-ward; he delayeth a while, that he may lose none of his elect; so that if any delay be, it is out of no negligence or laziness, but to bring all his blessed designs about. 3. Though he stay a while, yet his coming is so certain, that he would have us looking on it as now, " The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." His coming will be quick, that the most part will be surprized with it; and as to the godly, it will be tineous, all things being ready.

These words then speak of Christ's second coming to judgment, for it is that which is longed for by the saints, as that which putteth an end to all their straits, and bringeth a reward to them with it; to this he will come, and very quickly.

The words bear out these doctrines. 1. That our Lord Jesus shall surely and quickly come to judgment. 2. The scope and manner of expression holdeth out this, that the faith of Christ's quick approach to judgment, is of great concernment, and very useful to believers, therefore it is so very often spoken of, and repeated. 3.

That notwithstanding hereof, the faith of Christ's coming is often weak in believers, and had need to be confirmed, therefore is this truth so inculcate. Many are like these, 2 Pet. iii. 4. "Saying, where is the promise of his coming?" 4. Though many question his coming, yet there is nothing more certain, it is confirmed by him that testifieth these things. The scope and use of all these will fall in under the same thing, therefore I shall speak of all under this general, That it is a certain and fundamental truth, that our Lord Jesus shall quickly come to judgment; that we who now live, shall shortly see our Lord Jesus appear visibly in the clouds.

I shall first clear and confirm this truth. 2. Speak to the uses of it. And 3. Close with a word of application.

First, I shall clear and confirm it from these scriptures that point at the certainty and manner of his coming. 1. It is told us he shall come visibly, chap. i. 7. "Every eye shall see him, even they that pierced him." Matth. xxiv. 30. "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." The godly shall see him, being caught up into the clouds to meet him; and the wicked shall see him, and not get a hiding place or shelter. 2. It is holden out as exceeding glorious and powerful, Matth. xxiv.

20, 31. "The Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Matth. xxv. 31. "He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory." Matth. xvi. 27. "He shall come in the glory of his Father." And this is so certain; that it was known from the beginning, Jude verse 14. Enoch prophesied, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," or millions of his saints: so that this is no new, but an old truth. 3. His coming is spoken of as most dreadful and doleful, chap. i. 7: "All the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." They shall cry to the hills, fall upon us, and to the mountains, cover us, for great is the day of his wrath, and who shall be able to stand? as it is, chap. vi. at the end. It is holden out as a most comfortable coming to the godly, they shall lift up their heads with joy, because the day of their redemption draweth near. They shall gather together to him, to the carcase they shall flock from the east, west, north and south, to meet the bridegroom. All which shew the certainty of this truth, of our Lord's coming to judgment.

Secondly, I shall clear it from these scriptures that hold out Christ's end in his coming to judgment. 1. That all his enemies

may be made his footstool, and he may stand last on the earth, Jude verse 15. "To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds," and to vindicate his glory "of all the hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken." 2 Thess. i. 7. "To take vengeance on all that know him not, and that have not obeyed the gospel." 2. He will come to perform his promises to the godly, John xiv. 3.—18. "I go to prepare a place for you, and will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." And John xvi. 22, "I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice." He has trifled his coming again with the closing of all their misery, therefore acts iii. 19, it is called, "the day of refreshing;" and verse 21. "The times of the restitution of all things." And Rom. viii. 23, "The redemption of the body." 3. He comes to clear many things that lay before dark, to clear the godly of many reproaches and imputations lying on them, to make them liars that has loaded them with calumnies, to discover hypocrites, Matth. x. 26. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known. And every one shall be judged

according to their works," Rev. xx. 12. " And he that confesseth him before men, he will confess him before his Father; and whoso denieth him now, will be denied of him then." Things are in suspense here, and often judgment passeth not according to righteousness, therefore the Lord will have wrong sentences reduced, and matters discussed, and all spots wiped off his people. And all these ends being certain, his coming to judgment must also be certain.

Thirdly, I shall clear, and confirm it from these scriptures that speak of the effects of his coming. 1. The doleful effects of it on reprobates and hypocrites, fear shall surprise them, they shall all wail because of his coming, and would shun it, if they could. The scripture is full to this purpose, " Darkness and anguish shall be upon the earth, perplexity, mens hearts failing them for fear, paleness on all faces, shaking on all loins," &c. A second effect is, the consummation of all things, whereof see the end of chap. xx. " The heavens and earth fled away." 2 Pet. iii. 10. " The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burnt up." A third effect is, judgment and the setting of thrones, and the

calling and convocation of all before him, and sentencing all. The setting of judgment, is a proof of the coming of the judge. A fourth effect is, the execution of the sentence, his calling of the godly to enter into their master's joy, and his dismissing of the reprobate, that never accepted his offer, nor made peace with him, into everlasting fire of hell, as Matth. xxv. and of which we spoke, chap. xx, at the end.

Fourthly, We add this word more, the general consent of all consciences to this truth, and the fears that will surprise wicked persons sometimes, under the apprehension of this judgment, which they cannot get smothered. Rom. ii. 15. It is said, the Gentiles' conscience on the commission of sin accuse them, "their conscience accusing and excusing one another," which is spoken with a respect to judgment. The conscience will say to the man, this and that you must count for. And in this respect our Lord Jesus has "not left himself without a witness," as the apostle speaks, Acts xiv. 17.

We come to the use of this, and it is of concerning use, and therefore not in vain repeated and insisted on by our Lord.

Use 1. To clear and confirm this most fundamental point of Christianity, without

the faith of which folks are not worthy to be called Christians. It is an article of what we call the Creed, " From thence will he come to judge the quick and the dead." And the common assent that is given to these articles, and that among the rest, sheweth the general assent of all Christians unto it.

Use 2. Not only to receive this as a truth, but seeing it is concerning a truth, as our Lord saith, Luke ix. 44. " Let these thoughts sink in your hearts;" so we say, let this truth sink in your hearts. There is no truth you would be more in meditation of, nor have more in your mouth than this, of our Lord's coming quickly to judgment, he is on his way. And we conceive, this is one of the main uses Christ aims at, in repeating and gravely asserting it, that it may be seriously thought upon, and firmly believed, and therefore, 1. Think on the manner and ends of his coming to judgment, that nothing escapes folks here, but they will be called to account for it. 2. That his coming will be dreadful to many, that these heavens will pass away with a noise, as a piece of cloth that is riven screeds, so to speak. And 3. Think often on the suddenness of his coming, that as James v. 9. speaketh, " the judge standeth at the

door," and is at hand. 4. That it is most certain, which confirmeth all. And these things ye would apply in meditation to your own condition, by thinking on his coming to you, and calling you to a reckoning, and to let this go through your thoughts frequently.

The reason why we commend to you, to let this truth sink and give it credit, is, because of the usefulness of it, which might be a doctrine, but we take it in the use. The usefulness will appear from these considerations. It is exceeding useful, 1. For the subduing of that common atheism that is generally in the hearts of men, Pet. iii. 3, 4. where it is told, "There shall be mockers in the last times," and atheists, that shall say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" The thinking upon Christ's coming to judgment keeps the heart in awe; and the conscience tender, and will bid you take care what you speak or do, if going over your light, of mispending time. 2. It is exceeding useful to work patience under cross dispensations, with which we must meet, for Christ saith, he comes quickly to put a close to them. 2. It serveth to stir up to watchfulness, Rev. xv. 13. "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth." And watchfulness is often pressed on this ground, 1 Pet.

iv. 7. "The end of all things is at hand; be sober, and watch unto prayer." 4. It exceedingly strengtheneth hope, and encourageth to wait on God. In a word, there is no duty but Christ's coming is made use of as a motive to enforce it, 2 Pet. iii. 11. "Seeing we look for these things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" 2. There is no sin but it is an awe-band to keep the heart from it. 3. There is no sort of cross but it mitigateth, and strengtheneth, and giveth consolation under it; therefore there is reason of being more than ordinary in the exercising of faith, and meditating on this truth.

Use 3. To reprove the generality of men, profane atheists and mockers, graceless hypocrites, and unwatchful believers.

First, If Christ be coming quickly to judgment, what faith it to the generality that have not the faith of this, are not minding an appearance before him? Think not but there have been and are such sort as the apostle Peter, chap. iii. 3, 4. speaks of, "In the last days shall be mockers, saying, where is the promise of his coming?" And the scripture hath not foretold this for nought, are there not many in our days, whose practice, if we compare it with the word of God, will be

found among these mockers, and such as believe not this truth? And that it is so, we shall give three scripture evidences of it.

1. The little fear and awe of God that is generally among men, the little respect men have to judgment, the little tenderness in their walk, the great security and uncleanness in their peace, the little striving against known sin, &c. “The wickedness of the wicked faith within my heart, there is no fear of God before their eyes:” so the practice of the most part faith, they have not the faith of a judgment. When they are in a strait by sea, or in sickness, or some sudden thing befallereth them, the then thoughts of judgment will rise, but they quickly evanish; so that the most part either say, he will not come, or, he will not come quickly, and therefore take a liberty.

2. The little preparation that is made for his coming. If ye believed he were coming, and for such ends as ye have heard, ye would be making ready for it. If ye had a letter from a great man, that he were coming to your house, ye would prepare for him; yet though ye have Christ’s letter for it, that he is coming, ye do not prepare for him; this saith, ye believe a man, but not Christ. And I would pose you, if the cry were made this night, “The Lord cometh,” what a pos-

ture would you be found in? Many of you would be found napping, many in their sin, many settled on their lees, and would be surprised; which faith, ye believe not his coming, or else that it will not be quickly.

2. The much addictedness that is to the things of the world, wherein folks are nested. Folks take little notice of that, 1 Cor. vii. 29. "This I say, brethren, the time is short. It remains, that they that have wives, be as though they had none; they that use this world, as not abusing it." This language would be more in our hearts, and mortification would be more advanced, if Christ's coming, and coming quickly, were believed: but this addictedness to the world, like that man, Luke xii. this building and buying, and eager pursuit after these things, saith, that folks have not a mind to leave them. From this ye would consider.

1. That the faith of this is rarer than we take it.

2. That Christ will not only come, but also quickly, and therefore ye would be in readiness whenever the cry is, "to go out and meet him."

And 2dly, As the generality of professors, so also believers would be here reproved, who are so unsuitable in their practice and disposition to his coming, are making so little for it. It is not, unsuit-

able to our Lord's coming, to be unclear in our condition, whether our peace be made or not, and whether we shall be met of him in peace? 2. Is it not unsuitable that we should be fixing ourselves here, as if this were our rest, not longing for, or praying for his coming? 3. Is it not unsuitable to have our acquaintance to make with him at that day? Yea, if it be not made now, it shall not be made then. 4. It is unsuitable to his coming, to be unacquainted with our condition, and the frame of our heart. Is it not unsuitable to Christians that have the faith of his coming, and their hope in it as their happiness, to whom he has given the promise of it, to be without the joy of it, the mortification that floweth from it, and to be without the power and use of it many ways? And certainly, the more love is in it, and the more it is inculcate, the more will your guilt be that is not minding it..

Use 4. Seeing our blessed Lord Jesus hath said, he cometh and cometh quickly, prepare to meet him, and that earnestly and timeously. I say earnestly, from the dreadful experience, Luke xiii. of many who came too late, and find the door shut. What I mean by preparing to meet Christ, I shall take up in these few directions,

which being practised, may serve to put you in a posture for it.

The first is this, endeavour to have your peace made with God through Christ, Phil. iii. 9. that ye may be found in him, that is the first and great thing, which will do your turn when Christ comes; and it is that which Peter calleth, "to be found of him in peace." To be hid with a hill or mountain will not do it: your practices and endeavours will be to no purpose, if this bargain be not made. This is it that is in the offer before, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." and Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, ye to the waters." We exhort you not to let this offer pass, but to yield it, and receive it.

2dly, Not only labour to have your peace made, but to be sure it is made, 2 Pet. i. 10. "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." Know that your faith and hope be well grounded, that your confidence is such as will not make you ashamed. So many as are not endeavouring these two, are not in a posture for Christ's coming. It is peace with God, and clearness in it, that will give peace and boldness when the Bridegroom's voice is heard. Such know he is not a stranger, but a friend. This makes

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the difference betwixt some, that in that day will lift up their heads with joy, and others that will bewail because of him, when they find that their confidence is rooted out, and their hope blown up; for they had only an opinion of their interest, and no good grounds for it. Therefore try how it is with you, and seek to have all things in readiness, the evidences of sanctification, holiness to the Lord in all conversation, and a good conscience out of a tender respect to God's commandments, to bear witness for you.

3dly, Seek to have a watchful frame, which comprehendeth all the duties of holiness; to have your loins girded, and your lamps burning, not to be living securely, but to be vigilant and sober having your affections at home in heaven, and being mortified to the world. Folks will never be spiritual, nor in a posture for Christ's coming, till their loins be girded, and they be mortified to earthly designs, and till their lamps be burning. Not only you must have grace, but grace acting, for it was a fault in the wise virgins that they were sleeping when the cry was made, "The Bridegroom cometh." Ye would have faith acting, hope lively, your love warm, humility in exercise, patience, having its perfect work. And under these

three I take in all these duties that are called for from a Christian, in reference to Christ's coming. 1. To be in Christ. And 2. To be clear ye are in him. And 3. To be in a watchful frame. This frame and posture will bring boldness and joy with it to them that have it, at his appearing.

I shall speak to the application of this in two words. And, i. Let me sadly regret and expostulate an unsuitableness to this posture and frame, and an unanswerableness to such a word as this in us. Was there ever a time when there were fewer thoughts of Christ's coming? Do ye mind his coming that live in your ignorance and profanity, that are given to tippling, lying, swearing? whose words are at random; who not bow a knee to God in secret, nor in your families; who have taken on a lamp of a profession, but have no oil, neither are careful for it; who never knew what an ill nature was, nor the kindly exercise of grace in the heart. Know it for a certainty, there will be great odds when Christ cometh, betwixt you that have only lamps without oil, and these that have oil with their lamps, betwixt foolish and wise virgins, betwixt these that are prepared to meet him, and others that cared not for it. How can ye think on Christ's coming with

comfort, who have all your work to do, your peace to make, your heart unsober and gadding, your sin unpardoned, and whose temper is carnal and secure? The truth would be terrible, if considered, that Christ comes quickly, and it will be terrible one day, if ye continue in that condition.

2dly, Let me also expostulate with believers that are fallen asleep, and have their lamps gone out, whose grace is without exercise, whose zeal for God is grown cold, who are in a sleepy posture to meet your Lord, lukewarm and unwatchful. He may in his condescending grace let you trim your lamps, but it will be a sore challenge to you, that ye have given such way to security, and that as to the thriving of grace, there is little odds betwixt hypocrites and you. This is not like the faith of Christ's coming, there is no truth more certain than it is, he cometh quickly. It is seventeen hundred years since it was spoken, and there are many saints in glory since that time, and if so, he is now at the door. The Christians that lived in the primitive times may shame us, it was their ordinary word, "The Lord is risen, and the Lord is coming," and it made them watch. And though we be nearer his coming by so many hundred years, yet how unwatchful are

we? Would it have been believed, that these who should profess the faith of his coming, could notwithstanding live securely? What if there were not such a word of his coming in all the Bible could ye be more secure? Though ye were not to appear before him, could ye have fewer thoughts of his coming? And when this word is left on record, and so often repeated and cometh in here as his last word, shall it have no weight with you? Let it not be so, take advertisement, ere long ye shall find the truth of it.

And therefore think upon a few things for your up stirring, to prepare and make ready for Christ's coming. 1. Consider what ye will think of all these lusts and pleasures ye are now taken up with at Christ's coming. Ye that will not want your afternoons cracking, others that will not want your jeer and your mock, others that will not quit your humours, nor the sanctification ye imagine in your tippling, some that are profane and ignorant neglecters of prayer and family worship, others that rest on a form, and care for no more. What will ye think of yourselves on that day? Will ye not blush and think shame of it, when a reckoning ye must give, and will not get it shifted?

2. Ye that have more cleanly grounds of diversion, your lawful callings, your

merchandise or farm, or married wife, your family to provide for, &c. What will ye think of your enjoyments in that day, when there shall be neither house nor land, no difference betwixt the rich and the poor, the honourable and despised, when Christ's coming shall utterly deface this clay idol, and the fire shall destroy it?

3. Consider what ye will answer for all these opportunities that ye had to make your peace, and slighted them. Ye had the gospel offering peace, invitations to make your peace, the saving knowledge of Christ in plainness, liberty to wait on the ordinances without interruption, no persecution, nor hazard of banishment, or forfeiture for coming to the church in your time, and yet ye did not make use of these opportunities, ye cared not for grace, or did not thrive in it: and ye who did make use of them, ye might have made far better use of them than ye have done. How will ye answer for this at Christ's coming? Would God that from the knowledge of the terror of the Lord, we could persuade you to think more seriously on it. Ye "must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," and his coming will put you eternally in an unchangeable condition.

4. Consider what will come of all your shifts and excuses that ye have now to satis-

fy yourselves and others with in that day. It will not be, what have ye to say of me? He will make you to read atheism and contempt of him in your life and conversation, that did not acknowledge him, much idolatry, pride and selfishnes, many omissions and commissions that were forgotten, when the book shall be cast open, and nothing was secret that shall not be revealed. It will not be then, I heard many preachings, I was not a profane mocker, but my prayers evening and morning, see Luke xiii. where such objections were answered with a "Depart from me, I know you not." If ye say, ye had a hope of mercy, he will say, ye despised mercy, and will find you without among the dogs or liars, or such as loved lying. The time is coming when all your accounts will be looked over again, and many that have justified themselves, will be unexpectedly condemned, and all their proofs whereby they pleaded an interest in Christ, will be rejected. Ye that sit and hear these things now will one day see them performed, and the door casten in the teeth of many that had the lamps of profession, but sought for no more. Make ready for it, for there is not a truer word than this, "Behold, I come quickly." Lord make as answerable to it, and suitable to his coming.

S E R M O N . II.

REV. XXII. 20.

Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus.

THIS is a suitable close for one that has been admitted to so near fellowship with Jesus Christ, as John had been, and a suitable frame to take leave of him, and break off for a time that immediate and extraordinary communion. It is a kind word on Christ's side that he saith, "I come quickly:" and it is a hearty welcome on the believer's side, giving him a kind invitation, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus," A word that speaks out a lively frame, and though it be short, yet it shews forth much faith and love, faith believing he will come, and love desiring the fulfilling of the promise, and that he would come as he hath said.

That which we are now to speak of, is the latter part of the verse, which whether John's words or the bride's, or particular believers, it is all one. If they be John's words, it is spoken in name of believers. If the bride's words, it takes in John

and all believers. If particular believers words, it is as they are a part of the bride, who will give a hearty Amen to this truth, and what he promiseth, they turn it over into a prayer, and will not be long in doing of it, but will take the opportunity, and as they are desirous to have it, they will wrestle and long for it.

We shall leave general observations, and come to the words as they are knit to the former. There are two words prefixed to shew their earnestness in their suit. 1. Amen, Which is not only a consent to what is promised, and a believing of the truth of it, but a wish and ardent desire that it may be as it is promised, as Jer. chap. xxviii. 6. speaks, "Amen, the Lord do so, and perform thy words." So this abrupt Amen, is not only their setting to their seal to the truth of the thing, but a wishing and longing for it, even as the song of praise, Rev. xix. 4. "Amen, Alleluiah," that is, there is a good reason for it, O that all creatures might praise him. So Amen here is, Lord we not only believe thy coming, but, Lord, hasten it, let there be no delay of it.

The second word prefixed is, *Even so*, which is sometimes rendered, *So be it*, and sets out believers ardent desire to be

at the thing, they would have it, and say,
Let it be so.

3dly, Their suit is more directly expressed, "Come Lord Jesus," a short prayer, but with much faith and love, having in it a ground of hope that he will come, and an encouragement to pray that he may come, for he is Lord and Jesus, who came to redeem his people, and will come again according to his promise, as Heb. ix. 28. "He was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."

The words hold out a lively frame in believers, a frame they should be in: and would God we were all in such a frame to hear and speak of him. This being the sum and scope of all religion, to bring us to a comfortable meeting with Christ, they give us these three doctrines. 1. That Christ's second coming is a most desirable thing to believers, nothing they welcome sooner, no tidings so glad to them. 2. When believers are in a good frame, there is nothing they more long and pray for. 3. This petition hath more than ordinary seriousness in it, and wrestling in believers to be at it: for though the petition be short, the two words prefixed shew their seriousness that present it. All cometh to one

purpose, and therefore we shall not speak of them separately but jointly.

First, That Christ's coming is most desirable to believers, is clear from the Old Testament, it was Job's great comfort, chap. xix. 25. “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that with these eyes I shall see him, and not another for me; though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, I shall behold him,” &c. This is the great consolation, he hath against all his present crosses and temptations; and it is generally given out as the ground of the saints consolation, 1 Thess. iv. at the end, when he has been speaking of Christ's coming to judgment, and of the dissolution of all things, “comfort ye one another with these words,” saith he, that Christ shall come, and we shall see it.

Secondly, That believers, in a good frame, (whatever they may do when in a fit of passion and unbelief) and when their grace is in exercise, their is nothing they more long and pray for, nothing they are more desirous of. And to take in the

Third, No petition wherein they are more serious, nor more frequent. It is clear from verse 17, before; it is the voice Spirit, and of the bride, and the voice of the hearer. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say,

come." It is on this ground that, 2 Tim. iv. 8. believers are described from this, that they love his appearance, and long for it. And that same apostle, Rom. viii. 23. faith, "Even we ourselves which have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, viz. the redemption of our bodies;" like a sick man for health, or one in a prison for liberty, or like a loving wife for her husband. And the same considerations will clear believers' desire, the ground of their hearty welcome, and the cause of their longing for Christ's coming, there being nothing more interesting than these.

1. There is nothing more contributeth to his honour, being that which freeth his honour of the imputations put on it here, and putteth his enemies under foot; the way of his reigning here ceasing, and he as a full conqueror entering into the possession of all that he has bought, and giving the satisfaction his soul desired for all his soul travails, and never till then. And their being in believers a love to his honour, and to that which may satisfy him, must not that day be wished and longed for by them, when he shall be declared Lord and Christ? That being the solemnizing of the marriage, which till that day is suspended.

2. If we consider the state of the church, it

will be made perfect then, the bride then will be presented spotless, all the first-born will make their rendezvous, and the queen will be brought into the king in raiment of needle-work, all the virgins following her; therefore, Rom. viii. 23. it is called the day of believers' redemption, because their redemption is not perfected till then.

3. If we consider all the wicked, and the enemies of Christ, believers in that day they get the full victory and triumph over them all, Rev. xx. 14. "Death and hell, is then cast into the lake:" every thing that offendeth is cast out, and Christ's victory, and his saints victory and triumph is not complete till that day come.

4. If we consider our own particular condition, it is desirable for ourselves, it is the day of our particular marriage to Christ, and this maketh it to be the more longed for, because every particular believer have their interest in it, there is then a divorcement betwixt them and the body of death, they are married to Christ, and shall be made like him, we shall then see our Redeemer, and no other for us.

5. All the promises are then made out,
1. The promises that relate to justification, for believers justification shall then be declared openly and judicially, they shall be freed from the guilt of sin, and all the

effects of it. 2. The promises of sanctification shall then be perfected, the body that was sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; it was sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it was sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; that body that bare the image of the earthly Adam, shall bear the image of the heavenly, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 42—49. “ This corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.” And Phil. iii. 21. “ He shall change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his own glorious body;” our bodies are not so much vile for their natural form, as for original corruption that sticketh unto us. 3. The promises of consolation are then perfected, “ Where he is there shall his servants be.” He shall then say, “ Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom;” come, faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord and master. 4. The promises of freedom from crosses are then perfected. In this life believers are subject to persecution, and have no full freedom from sin, and while sin is in them, the cross attendeth them; but then there shall be no more curse, no more crying, nor complaining, the second coming of Christ brings abso-

lute freedom from sin, and all the effects of it.

Lastly, The promises of glorification, the conforming of us to his image, the placing of us on the throne, the souls and bodies of all the elect, united together, and entered in possession of glory, to have rooms among them that stand by, to eat and drink with him in his kingdom; all these, and whatever we can think on that tendeth to believers comfort, and much more is perfected there.

2. As the promises, so all the prophesies of the glory of God, of his victory over enemies, of his calling in his ancient people, &c. shall then be accomplished: that day puts an end to all prophesies, all that is in part is then done away, when that which is perfect is come,

3. The perfecting of believers, I mean all of them together, and in soul and body, is fully done in that day, when their shall be no darkness upon their understandings, but they shall see the incomprehensible God so far as they are capable, and is as meet for them to comprehend him, to the encrease of their wondering and admiration, and for a foundation to their praise without any mistake, all infirmities being then done away.

4. That time putteth an end to all inter-

vening ordinances, there shall be no more preaching nor prayer, no more hearing of preaching, nor reading of scripture, nor coming to the church, the Lord is the temple, and the light of the higher house, and there is an immediate enjoying of him, which swalloweth up the need of all intervening means. And,

5. In a word, there is no more time, and under time we comprehend all that is suitable to time, and is under time, death changeth distance with God, crosses and persecutions, all that is imperfect, being the appendicles of time, there is nothing then but what is unchangeable, and in the highest degree perfect; and all these accompanying, Christ's coming, and bringing believers consolation to the height, is it any wonder his coming be desirable and longed for by them?

Taking this then for a granted truth, that there is nothing more lovely to a believer, nor more desirous nor more longed and prayed for by him when he is in a good frame, we come to make our use of it.

And first, It is a mark to try a lively frame by, for if it be true that believers are not right when they are not in frame, and if it is an evidence of the bride being in a lively frame, that she says, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," then believers are in a

right frame, when they can, on good grounds put up this prayer, when they desire and long for, and wrestle in prayer for his coming. For clearing of this use, we shall speak a word or two of three things, to prevent mistakes. 1. To clear what I understand by a good or lively frame. 2. What are the characters of a right or solid desire after Christ's coming. 3. A word for answering some objections of believers.

For the first, a right frame for Christ's coming, and wherein believers desire his coming, is, in short, this.

1. When believers are clear in their interest. 2. When they are acting and exercising their faith, love and hope, when it is thus with them, it is impossible but they will be longing to have their love satisfied in enjoying and delighting in the object of their faith and hope: and a serious desire for Christ's coming, is a companion of this frame, and it is impossible others can desire his coming, for they have him to look for as an enemy. And believers cannot desire his coming, if they be out of the exercise of grace, for then they are under ground of challenge.

For the second, the characters of a right desire after Christ's coming. 1. It is accompanied with a good frame, take never at for a right desire of Christ's coming,

that proceedeth not from peace with God on good grounds, and from the exercise of faith and love in the heart. It is but profane atheism that dare say, " let the Lord come," and looketh not into the heart, to see if it be in a fit posture for his coming. 2. A right and solid desire of Christ's coming, takes in all that accompanieth his coming, as that Christ would perfect his saints, that antichrist may come down, and the Jews may be called in. As it desireth that Christ may come for its own good, so it desireth that all these things may be performed in their new order. So that it is a rational and submissive desire waiting for these things that concern his honour. 3. Where a right desire is there will be a desire of hastening all these things before his coming, that the bride may be made ready, the old covenant renewed betwixt him and his people, and antichrist brought down, and it dare not precipitate nor half his coming. 4. Where a right desire is, there will be a serious preparing for his coming, that it may be found of him in peace, and in its station endeavouring to make others ready with itself, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge

shall give unto me; and not to me only, but to all that love his appearing," and wait for him in the manner that I have done. " I desire to be with Christ, which is best of all;" yet he qualifieth it, " Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you." Say not that ye love and long for Christ's coming, your conscience beareth you witness, that were he coming, you would fear it. 5. Right longing has a sober and distinct meditation of his coming, that the heart warmeth with love to it, and setteth one to pray for it, " Let thy kingdom come," which is perfected at Christ's second coming. This longing is attended with praying for Christ's coming, from the advantage that cometh by it, and from the desire it has to enjoy him, that it may be free of sin, and bear his his image, -2 Cor. iv. Not so much to be uncloathed, as cloathed upon, not to be freed of crosses, or to get a carnal revenge of enemies, but for the believed good that is to be gotten by it, to enjoy him, and see Christ honoured before all the world; hence right desires put up this suit, " Come, Lord Jesus."

For the third, to speak a word to some objections of believers who may think this hard; and indeed it may be hard to them that never knew what it was to be presling out such a word as this, " Come Lord

Jesus"; but have been rather afraid to think or hear of his coming, and there are two or three sorts of these.

1. Such as are in an unsuitable frame: this will prove them not to be in a posture meet for Christ's coming, and that they are fallen from their watchfulness, their faith is not acting and their love is not lively; yet it will not prove that they are not believers, nor that they love not Christ's coming: even as a wife may love her husband's coming home, but because there are some things wrong in the house that should be righted, she desireth not his coming as yet, till she get them righted; but an universal carelessness is not good.

2. There are others that would fain have him coming, but they fear their peace is not made, they would fain be clear they are friends with him, and be in a better frame ere he come. Here there is not a fearing at Christ coming, but a desire to be in a better posture for his coming: there is a fear for something in themselves, and yet a desire that he may come, and these may well stand together; even as the wife that would fain have her husband at home, and is praying for it, yet she findeth something not right, which she would fain have have righted, and then she would welcome him gladly: and this fear flows from sor-

respect and kindly reverence to him, knowing that every posture is not suitable for him.

A third sort are these that have love to Christ and his coming, but think nothing of it, it is so little, and this makes them afraid of his coming; they are convinced that Christ's company is so desirable, that they would chuse it before any thing, but their love is not as it should be. And we think this should excite in all an endeavour to have their love more fresh and fervent. So if the use be taken right, it will not be discouraging, although it should warn against security, neither does it strengthen the presumptuous that have neither faith in Christ, nor love to him.

Use second, of discovery and reproof, if it be an evidence of a good frame to long for Christ's coming, it must be an evidence of a bad frame, when Christ's coming is not valued, when there is no longing for it, and the heart least desirous to hear of it; but if folks could have an eternity betwixt Christ and them, they would chuse it. Is it the frame or language of the Spirit, and the Bride, that faith, " Come, Lord Jesu," and our hearts faith go? This certainly is an evidence of a bad frame in believers, and in others of want of love, ere love to, and longing for Christ's

coming is altogether neglected. Is there not ground to reprove us that live in this time, for want of this frame of longing for Christ's coming? I would here speak a word to these three. 1. To some evidences of this ill frame. 2. To some causes of it. 3. To the unsuitableness of it in all, especially in believers.

First, The evidences that we are not longing for Christ's coming. And, 1. I would pose you, if an habitual distemper, that your spirits are most subject to, be not a rife evil, that is, never to mind Christ's coming, never to pray or long for it. What prayers have been put up for it? Has there ever been any groans betwixt God and you, for hastening his coming? Lay it to your conscience, and if this evidence be not clear, you may be judge,

2. Try if the thoughts of his coming be not terrible, or at least wersh and uncomfortable to you, and whether the fear of death and judgment doth not mar other consolations, and the soul would never go out to meet him, but is haled out, it yieldeth not to him freely, that is another evidence that ye are not in a good frame for Christ's coming.

A third evidence is, folks little preparing for his coming, and hastening to meet him as the word is, 2 Pet. iii. 12. "Lookin

for and hastening unto the coming of the Lord," that when he cometh, there may be no more ado but to close with him; so be transporting the best half to him, conversing with him, and while he cometh not to us, to be much with him; but how little of this is among us? Is there any thing more wise than mens' living without all respect to his coming, not setting their affections on things above, not seeking to have their peace made, and their interest clear, or to walk so as no quarrels may be betwixt Christ and them? Would any think that a woman were desirous of her husband's home-coming, that were not making ready for him, nor labouring to have things in right order when he comes?

A fourth evidence is, little praying, or endeavouring by prayer, and other means, to advance these things that go before his coming, the enlargement of his kingdom, the bringing down of antichrist, the adorning of the bride: where this is neglected it telleth folks coldrifeness. If there were a love to Christ's coming, his kingdom would go neat you, and ye would be more public-spirited, and not so selfish; a selfish mind will never desire his coming.

A fifth evidence is, exceeding addic-ted-
ess to the things of the world; these that
ve not in their heart quit the world,

desire not his coming. And I think there was never a time when the world had more of folks hearts, the great security and much temporizing that is among us, telleth how much we are wedded to it, and resolute on it, and it faith, we have no desire of his coming. The Thessalonians were upon one extreme, careless, and would not work, 2 Thess iii. 10. And we are upon another extreme, of addictedness to the world.

Secondly. The causes of this evil, or the reasons why Christ's coming is so little longed for, are these,

1. Little faith of the great advantages that accompany his coming, it is not believed that his appearing will be so glorious and advantageous, and so full of happiness, that at the dissolution of all these things there will be a full victory over all enemies, no sin nor sorrow any more to believers, there is a faintness in the faith of believers, that marreth the longing for his coming.
2. As there is little clearness in the general, so far less is there a particular application of the faith of Christ's appearing for their glory and happiness. And while souls are under doubts whether they will get good of Christ at his appearing, they cannot long for it: but were folks clear in their interest, and that all the promises will be performed to them at his coming, they would be much

more longing for it. Folks little desire of Christ's coming, telleth their confidence is rather security than true peace; for, is it possible, if Christ's coming were believed, and your interest in it, but your soul would cry out, "When shall the day dawn, when he shall rent these heavens and come down?" There would be a longing to be through time, and a holy impatience at the misgiving of any thing ye thought might lengthen his stay. 3. Folks settling here, as if their rest were here, they hereby declare, that they place not their happiness in Christ's second coming, but are saying, "Who will shew us any good, and it is good for us to be here?" They have some design about creature-comforts, and would have that perfected ere Christ come, and therefore long not for his coming, not considering that this is the most noble design, and that the preparing for Christ's coming layeth ground for a better portion to them and their children than all their attainments in a world. The faith of Christ's coming, and mens placing their happiness in it, would awaken their desires after it; if folks stock were in this vessel, it would be longed for. 4. Little experience of his coming now, in the sensible intimations and manifestations of his Spirit and presence; were folks clear in their interest, and frequent

in communion with him, they would be saying with old Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

When there are fresh proofs of Christ's sweetnes, and views of his excellency gotten, there will be longing desires of immediate enjoying of him: and little of this, makes little crying out for the living God, or for appearing before God; ye taste not that the Lord is gracious, else ye would long for it. If ye would taste and see how good he is; if ye had a little experience of the ravishment of his sweetnes, ye would say, when a taste of him is so delectable, sweeter than honey and the honey-comb, as hid manna, what must the full harvest and compleating of the bargain be, when the arles is so sweet? And this would make you long for his coming, as Titus ii. 13. From these causes may be gathered the means to keep the heart in a good frame for his coming.

The third thing, is, that this is most unsuitable to all, and especially to believers, that there should be so little longing and desire for Christ's coming, so little praying for it. I may leave it on you to judge, is it suitable to the great advantages we profess to expect by his coming, or the faith of them? Is it suitable to the many promises

we have, and our profession of the right we have to them, not to desire the fulfilling of them? No sooner doth Christ promise, but as soon John, or the bride here, has in echo for the fulfilling of it. Is it suitable to profess love to Christ, and yet not desire union with him, and the full coming of his kingdom? And is it not unsuitable to what he has done to make way for his second coming? He came in the form of a servant, and did and suffered what he did, and suffered to make way for his coming, to take believers to glory. Much weakness of faith, want of love, uncertainty of hope, disrespect and want of regard to Christ may be read out of this frame. The promise is not improven, and we know not what it is to be comforted in it:

Use third. To stir us up to this as a duty called for from us, and as a frame that is requisite to be serious in desiring, longing, and praying for Christ's coming, and improving what goes along with it. That which we would press, is,

1. That your love may be towards it, that ye may never rise nor ly down at night, but your desires may be venting this way.

2. That ye would be putting up more prayers for it. We conceive this may be cause of his delay, and of the delay of many things that are to go before it, little diligence in praying for it, and these things in order to it.

3. We would recommend to you, to be more serious in longing, and praying for it, as that wherein our Lord's honour consisteth, and the thriving of his kingdom, and whereby we evidence a kindly sympathy with our Lord; and do not content yourselves to pass it over with a dry wish. And for your upstirring to it, consider, that it is here holden forth as a frame of heart that is spiritual, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come:" yea, in some sort, it is holden forth as the believer's duty. And I would lay it upon you, as ye would evidence yourselves native branches of this vine, and members of the body, whereof he is the head, and a part of his bride, say, Come Lord Jesus.

Use fourth. It is ground of notable consolation to believers. Is it not great ground of consolation that our Lord hath said and confirmed it, "That he is coming, and that he is coming quickly?" Many dark words are in this book, but this is clear, he saith, "He cometh quickly to judge the world, to raise your bodies, to make up the union betwixt him and them, to solemnize the marriage, to bring you to the wedding, that love his appearing;" and all that ye have heard spoken of it, shall be made good.

Use 5. The close of all is, Christ's speak-

a word as his drawing to an end, verse
 " He that testifieth these things, saith
 ly, I come quickly." It is he that
 keth, verse 16—18. that testifieth these
 gs, and that which he saith is a promise,
 prophecy of Christ's coming, and of
 certainty and suddenly of his coming
 idgment. 2. And the last words of
 verse are an hearty and warm welcome,

John in the name of all believers, or
 bride giveth to this truth, promise, or
 prophecy of the coming of the Lord; Amen;
 only let it be so, but I wish, and long,
 pray that it may be so, even so, or, so
 t, *Come, Lord Jesus, as thou hast pro-
 ed.*

Here is here then a promise made, which
 a turneth up to God in a most fervent
 olication, not only for himself, but for
 whole church of Christ also, upon the
 ing and consideration of this, that
 ist is to come again and receive believ-
 o himself, that where he is, there they

be also: such ejaculations of the soul
 often interrupt the thoughts and dis-
 ses of those who are in the faith of be-
 found of him in peace at his appear-
 , the lively apprehension of what they
 spect at the day when they shall see
 as he is, produceth such a sweet com-
 ncy in it, and stirring of heart to be

possessed of it, that there must needs follow such ardent desires after as will almost prevent all deliberation: for, excellent objects, have such an amiable aspect upon the soul, and attractive power over the heart, that it most willingly yieldeth up itself, and as if it were all composed of desires, it breathed forth nothing but earnest wishes after a nearness and inseparable conjunction with that object. Now, what can be proposed to the immortal soul like this, to hear Christ say, " behold I come quickly?" Truly the apprehension is at a stand, in unfolding that blessedness which is included in this one sentence, it goeth beyond the reach of a created understanding to search it out unto perfection; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what is here imported. And therefore no wonder to see it draw such a holy heart forcibly after it, breathing out all the way such a desire, " Even so, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly," as if his heart intended by this wish to anticipate that day: but because he knew the bride was not yet made ready, and that there was a long tract of time to intervene betwixt the giving of this promise and that day wherein the marriage of the Lamb shall be solemnized, when he shall bring her unto the king all glorious with-

a, in clothing of wrought gold, and rai-
 sent of needle work, with the virgins her
 companions that follow her, that they may
 enter the king's palace, to be with him
 here forever; because he knew, that be-
 fore this there were many sad emergents
 and searching dispensations to be met with,
 such winds to blow as should overblow
 very one who was not blasted with the
 race of God, such false doctrines to be
 spread as would carry about every one
 whose heart was not established by grace,
 such deceivers privily bringing in damnable
 heresies, that if it were possible the very
 elect should be deceived, so many duties
 to be done, and so much affliction to be
 suffered, as were impossible to be perform-
 ed and borne without the assistance of spe-
 cial grace, therefore as the conclusion of
 the whole, verse last, he desireth "that
 the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ may
 be with them all," as that which by its
 sensible presence or supporting influ-
 ence, would carry them through whatso-
 ever they might meet with; for there is no
 difficulty so great which will not vanish
 and disappear before his grace; and a gra-
 cious man is able to do and suffer all things
 through Christ that strengtheneth him.
 His grace is indeed the one thing necessary
 to make a man carry creditably for the gol-

pel, and comfortably to himself in all cases that may be incident: he who is strengthened by the might of his grace in the inner man, will be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. And therefore it is wonder, that one who was seen, in the concerning events which should fall out till Christ's second coming, did wrap up all his desires for the saints with an Amen, in this one wish, "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all." The very pulse of a holy soul beareth still this way, his temper may be known by the ordinary unconstrained and habitual desires of his heart: let others wish to themselves and their friends what they please, that which a holy man wisheth to himself, and those whom he loveth best is this, that the grace of Jesus Christ may be with them; he would have his own desires, with the desires and endeavours of every man else, terminate upon this.

Lastly, Know ye that slight Christ's coming, that are not preparing and longing for it, ye mar yourselves of much comfort, your loss is great here, for ye want the comfort that cometh by the promise of his coming; and your loss shall be unspeakable hereafter, when ye shall be shut from his presence eternally, Luke xxi. 26—28. These two are put together, and C—n—

coming in the middle, " Mens' hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after these things that are coming." But speaking to the disciples, and in them to all believers, i.e. faith, " When these things come to pass, then look, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth near," your happiness shall then be compleated. Seeing then it is the language of the Lord, " Behold, I come quickly;" and the language of the Spirit, and the bride, of John, and all believers, " Even so, come Lord Jesus." All of you endeavour such a frame, as ye may join in that petition on on good grounds.

And daily, Let your hearts close, and give a hearty echo to that word, " I come quickly," out of love and longing for his coming, and say, " Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus." And even so, let him come quickly. *Amen.*



